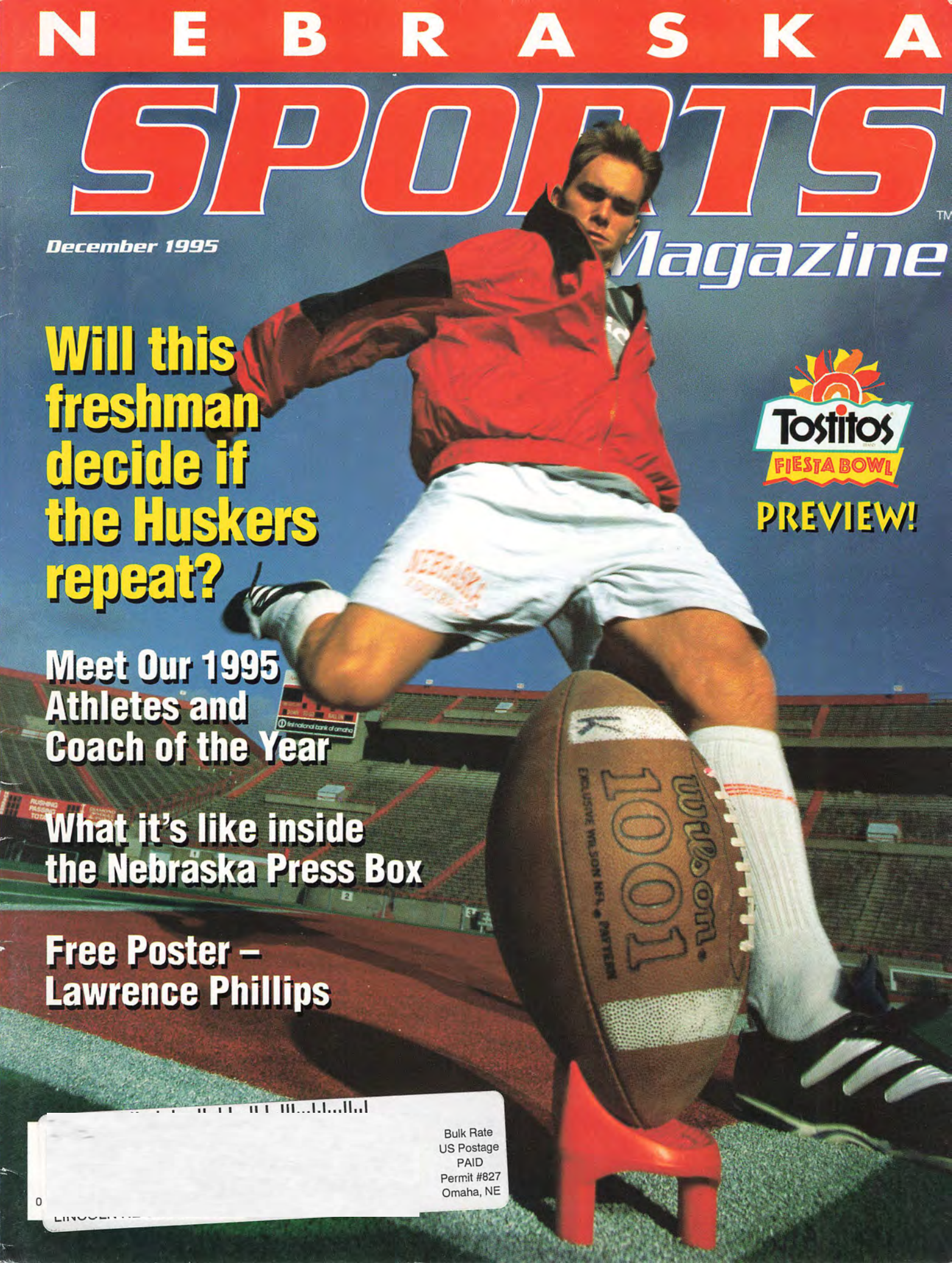
NEBRASKA
SPORTS
Magazine
December 1995
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Tostitos
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UNSTOPPABLE

After upsetting previously-unbeaten Millard North in the state semifinals, Millard South and quarterback Josh Miller couldn't be stopped by Papillion-LaVista in the Class A championship game.

Photo by Eric Francis

NEBRASKA SPORTS™ Magazine

Volume 2, No. 9

10 **Nebraska Sports Magazine's 1995 Year-End Awards**
Meet two athletes and a coach who achieved beyond expectations this year:
- Male Athlete of the Year: Ahman Green, University of Nebraska
- Female Athlete of the Year: Allison Weston, University of Nebraska
- Coach of the Year: Mike Evans, Bellevue University

16 **Gallery of Champions**
Multiple titlists dominate the list of high school fall sports champions.
Stories by Sean Weide Photos by Eric Francis, Bob Berry

COVER STORY

20 **Every Point Counts**
Can Nebraska football fans rest easy if freshman kicker Kris Brown is called upon to kick the game-winning field goal in the Fiesta Bowl?
Story by Nick Schinker

30 **Making His Mark**
Nebraska basketball player Tom Wald wants to be remembered for more than three free throws in an overtime win against Michigan State last year.
Story by Brian Hill Photos by Bob Berry

40 **The View From Above**
Watching a Husker football game from the press box at Memorial Stadium is desired by many, cherished by most and experienced by few.
Story by Sean Weide Photos by Eric Francis

46 **Sports Fan Holiday Gift Ideas**
From a Husker football screen saver to a custom-made putting green, here's 15 holiday gift ideas that are sure to satisfy just about any sports fan.

DEPARTMENTS

4 Letters to NSM
6 Inside Nebraska Sports
7 NSM Athlete of the Month
8 Out of Bounds! by Jim Rose
9 Boom Right Here! by Gary Java
28 Lawrence Phillips Poster
44 Fiesta Bowl Preview
56 Commentary Next Time, Say Oz-Burn
54 The Lineup
50 Great Sports Programs by Jon Ryan
58 Between the Lines by John Knicely

On the cover: Nebraska kicker Kris Brown. ***Photo by Eric Francis***

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from the letter editor

Not a month goes by without someone saying, "I really like the look of Nebraska Sports Magazine."

As NSM's managing editor, I typically respond with a "thank you" while also making a conscious effort to mention that I will pass along the compliment to the person who should hear it most, our art director.

That person is Suzan Matherne, who joined the Nebraska Sports Magazine team in October.

Matherne, 26, came to us from the Wedding Information Network, where she was a graphic artist for the company's bridal magazine, The Wedding Pages.

This month marks the second issue Matherne has designed for NSM. Working on the November issue was kind of a "baptism by fire," she said, as the printing deadline loomed just two weeks away from her first day on the job.

"I came in at the 11th hour but I thought it was great because I learned by doing," she said.

Matherne took over the layout and design of the magazine from Tracey Cross, who was NSM's art director from the inaugural issue. Cross remains "on call" to assist with some aspects of the magazine, but she now concentrates most of her time on selling for the magazine's production partner, Graphic Technologies Inc.

Matherne, who moved from New Orleans to Omaha when she was 12, initially had aspirations of becoming a writer. An art conference she attended when she was in college, however, piqued her interest in the field and steered her toward a career involving design.

A graduate of Northwest Missouri State University in Maryville, Mo., Matherne said her new position reminds her of the long nights she spent during college working on student publications such as Heartland View, a local magazine published by the university's journalism department.

"It was fun to come to a place where a group of people take great care in producing a publication they can be proud of," Matherne said. "There's a lot of freedom as far as being creative and learning from all the people who were already here."

Although she is generally satisfied with the look of the magazine, expect to see a few subtle changes in the coming months, Matherne said.

"I really like the idea of putting large, colorful action photos in the table of contents section and I'm planning on making over some of the departments," she said.

Whatever she plans to do, I'm sure she'll have fun doing it and you're likely to enjoy it. Let us know.

Sean Weide

Please send comments to Nebraska Sports Magazine, 4115 South 133rd Street, Omaha, NE 68137-1105, or call (402) 333-8544 or (800) 333-8544 outside the Omaha area. Visit our site on the World Wide Web at http://www.nesports.com. Comments also can be sent via e-mail to Nebraska Sports Magazine at nesports@synergy.net or by facsimile to (402) 331-7142.

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Actual Form:

letters to nsm

Gary Java Funny, But Not Factual

I haven't heard Gary Java on the radio or seen him on his TV show, but the guy definitely should keep his day job.

His story, "Ya Wanna Start A Fight?" in the November issue was funny but not factual. How could he possibly leave Troy Aikman off the list of the Dallas Cowboys' greatest players in franchise history?

Aikman and Company are sure to lead "America's Team" back to the Super Bowl this year.

Saul Goldstein
Kansas City, Mo.

Correction

A photo caption within the story titled "Odd Man Out" in the November 1995 issue incorrectly identified Wahoo Neumann boys basketball coach Paul Johnson as Tim Turman.

"Your web site makes serving in the military worthwhile."

Michael Kimberly, *via e-mail*

'I Greedily Read Your Magazine'

I am a native Nebraskan transplanted to Iowa, and I greedily read your magazine from cover to cover when it comes in the mail.

Thanks for doing such a great job. I hope the Husker supporters in Texas and California have heard about this magazine!

Scott Christiansen
Orange City, Iowa

Less Husker Football, More Lancers

I really enjoy the big action photos in your magazine, but I think there's too many articles about the Nebraska football team.

How about more stories about the state's hottest team: the Omaha Lancers?

Don Guilfoyle
Bellevue, Neb.

'Glad I Found This Site'

I am in the military stationed at McCord AFB. I was born in North Platte and lived in Omaha. I love my Huskers so much but the information up here in Washington, especially about the Big Eight, is weak.

I am glad I found this site and I'm impressed thoroughly with the pictures.

Go Big Red!

James Astuto
bigjim@bigjim.seanet.com

Photo by Don Liebig

Novacek In Action

You did a nice job on your story on former players with ties to Nebraska and what they're doing in the NFL today.

I would have liked to have seen a picture of Jay Novacek doing what he does best — catching and running with the football. He is one of the hardest working players in pro football today.

Matthew Eldredge
New York, N.Y.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Letters

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IRISH WIN STREAK HALTED AT 87

The Falls City Sacred Heart football team had its state-record winning streak (featured in the September 1995 issue) snapped at 87 when the Irish lost 34-28 to Table Rock in double overtime in the quarterfinals of the Class D-2 state playoffs.

Table Rock's Thad Lytle stopped sophomore running back Aaron O'Grady two yards short of the end zone on fourth down to end the nation's second-longest high school football win streak.

"Of course it was a tough loss because the streak ended and because it was double overtime," Falls City Coach Doug Goltz said. "Our kids pretty much left it all on the field that night."

Less than three weeks after Sacred Heart's loss, the team it was chasing for the national record — Morrison (Okla.) High School — had its nation-leading win streak stopped at 90 games. Morrison lost 40-36 to Snyder (Okla.) in the playoff semifinals, ending its bid for an eighth-straight state title.

LET'S GO BOWLING!

Dec. 14	Las Vegas Bowl	8 p.m.	ESPN
Dec. 25	Blue-Gray Classic	11 a.m.	ABC
Dec. 25	Aloha Bowl	2:30 p.m.	ABC
Dec. 26	Independence Bowl	4:30 p.m.	ESPN
Dec. 27	Copper Bowl	7 p.m.	ESPN
Dec. 28	Alamo Bowl	7 p.m.	ESPN
Dec. 29	Sun Bowl	1:30 p.m.	CBS
Dec. 29	Holiday Bowl	8 p.m.	ESPN
Dec. 30	Liberty Bowl	11 a.m.	ESPN
Dec. 30	Carquest Bowl	6:30 p.m.	Raycom
Dec. 30	Peach Bowl	8 p.m.	ESPN
Dec. 31	Sugar Bowl	6:30 p.m.	ABC
Jan. 1	Outback Bowl	10 a.m.	ESPN
Jan. 1	Citrus Bowl	Noon	ABC
Jan. 1	Gator Bowl	Noon	NBC
Jan. 1	Cotton Bowl	12:30 p.m.	CBS
Jan. 1	Rose Bowl	4 p.m.	ABC
Jan. 1	Orange Bowl	7 p.m.	CBS
Jan. 2	Fiesta Bowl	7 p.m.	CBS
Jan. 13	East-West Shrine Classic	3 p.m.	ESPN
Jan. 20	Senior Bowl	TBA	TBS
Jan. 21	Hula Bowl	7 p.m.	ESPN

(All Times CST)

NEBRASKA COUNTY SCHOLARSHIP MYTH SURFACES AGAIN

When Colorado football coach Rick Neuheisel mentioned on his post-game radio show that Nebraska's success over the Buffs could be attributed to its county scholarship program, Nebraska Coach Tom Osborne — who was listening in at the time — shook his head in disbelief.

Nebraska's mythical "county scholarship" program grew out of one southeast Nebraska recruit's mention more than 20 years ago that local townspeople would help pay for his education at Nebraska if he decided to walk-on for the Huskers.

Osborne attempted to set the record straight during one of his weekly press conferences.

"That would be pretty nice to have another 92 or 93 more scholarships on top of the 85 that the NCAA allows," Osborne said. "It doesn't make any difference what you say or what the rules are, the rumor still persists that each county has a scholarship to send a player down here.

"The fact is we have 85 on scholarship and everyone else pays their own way."

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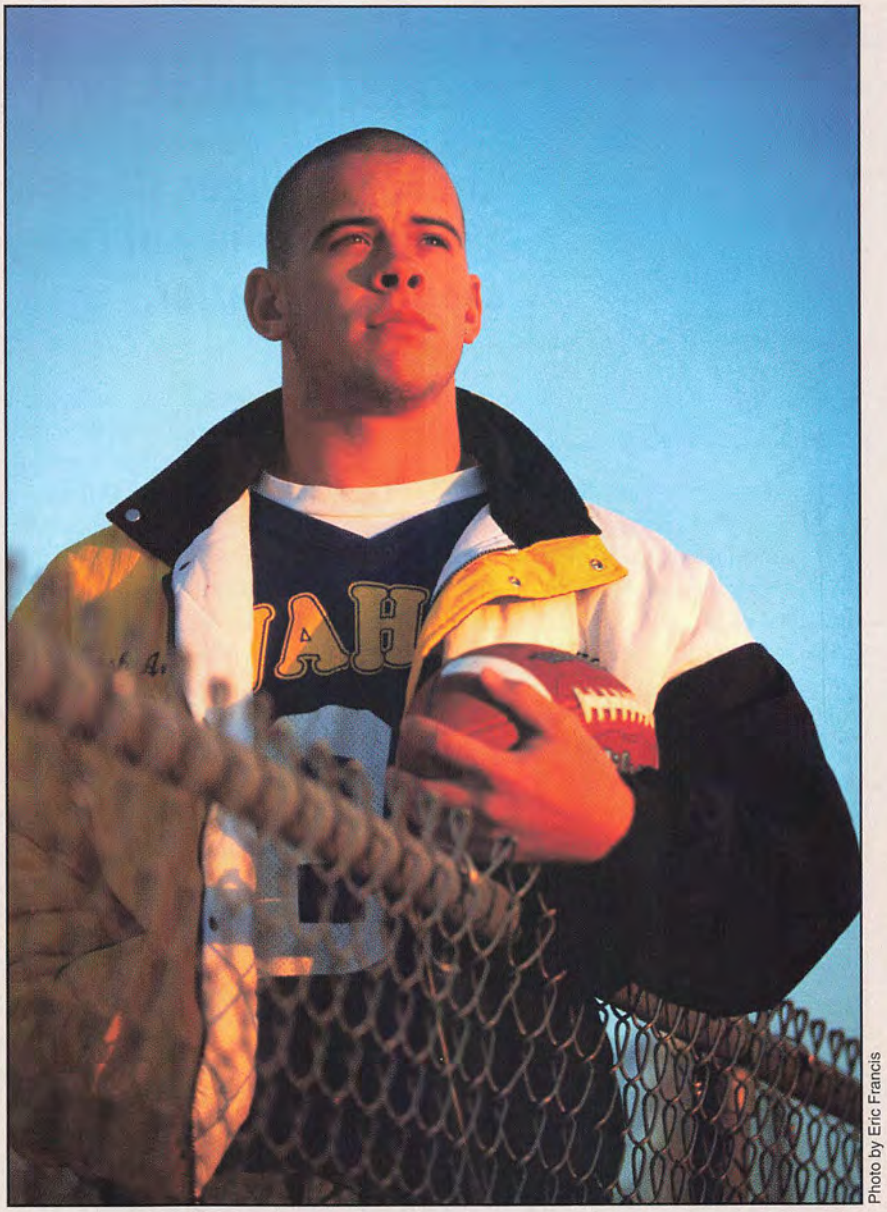


Photo by Eric Francis

Josh Anderson

Wahoo High School

Josh Anderson made things happen for the Wahoo High School football team this season. Anderson played a versatile role for the Warriors, who had their undefeated season end in the Class C-1 playoff semifinals with a loss to Milford.

The 5-foot-10, 170-pound senior started at running back and doubled as a receiver while leading Wahoo to wins in 11 straight games. He also was the Warriors' kick and punt returner, did their punting, and held for extra points and field goals. Defensively, he made 26 solo and 15 assisted tackles from his cornerback position and intercepted three passes.

"Josh is probably one of the better all-around players we've had here because he could do so many things," said his coach, Dick Tingelhoff.

Anderson rushed for 1,729 yards and 21 touchdowns in 12 games and topped the 200-yard mark in two playoff games, rushing for 209 yards in a 13-7 win over Columbus Scotus and 211 yards in a 42-13 win over Tri County.

Tingelhoff said Anderson's status for those two games was in doubt right up until game day due to a deep thigh bruise he sustained in a win over crosstown rival Wahoo Neumann.

"He was able to overcome his pain," Tingelhoff said. "The opposition wasn't probably even aware that he was hurt or that there was some doubt over whether we could even play him."

Anderson, who will most likely be a receiver or flanker on the collegiate level, was at his best in the open field. As the team's primary kick returner, he averaged 28 yards on kickoffs (with one touchdown) and 26 yards on punts, returning three for touchdowns.

"Josh made things happen," Tingelhoff said. "He never was intimidated by returning a punt. He didn't care if it was in traffic or in front of the goal line. A fair catch was not in his plans."

Anderson, who has a 3.0 grade point average, has taken two recruiting visits to the University of Nebraska and has been shown some interest by several other Big Eight schools. He can bench 315 pounds and has 4.63 speed (electronic) in the 40-yard dash.

"I'd love to go to Nebraska first," Anderson said. "I've been down to their football camp and I got to know a lot of coaches. They were really impressed with how I did. Hopefully, that's where I'll end up."

Tingelhoff said wherever Anderson ends up, he's sure to make things happen.

"Somebody's going to grab him at the very least, to return their kickoffs and punts and to catch some balls," he said. "He'll be a big-time playmaker." NSM

Nebraska's Forgotten Man

'Brook Berringer stands as testimony to the minds' eye insufficiency of last year. He is forgotten in the exploits of Frazier.'

PAINFUL, ISN'T IT? THE reality of sports. How one-half of the time, sports cheats us out of the glory of victory? Why is it that when a child steps on the playing field, so little is made of defeat?

In this culture today, defeat is taboo. Even the consideration of losing brands the athlete unfit for duty. The child is psychologically trained to win or gain nothing. It's a Joseph Kennedy-esque mentality of "there is no finishing second. Win or keep trying until you do."

It is this paradigm that troubles me and haunts Brook Berringer.

Slightly more than one year has passed from that glorious fall afternoon when the sun-soaked Memorial Stadium cast a god-like ray of shine on NU's then-starting quarterback.

His world was a paradise that day when he methodically engineered a potent ground game coupled with a 13-for-18 passing performance that totaled 267 yards. It was the last home game for the national title-bound Huskers, who under Berringer's surgeon-like mastery, had ascended to nine wins and the nation's top ranking. Nebraska beat Kansas, 45-17, that day and Berringer's ears were filled with the cacophony of cheers reserved for only the brightest star. Little did he know, or even detect, that, as the spotlight on him faded in the early evening, it would never return.

Berringer's performance against an inspired Oklahoma teams was generic. With Frazier now mended and suited up, practices became tense. Frazier would ultimately reclaim the starter's job before the Orange Bowl. But despite a respectable performance by Berringer in the second and third quarters of the bowl game that kept Nebraska afloat until the sails were up in the fateful fourth, it was the rival who was credited with the win and who carted away the MVP awards.

Painful isn't it? How victory and adulation intoxicate us only to foster dependency? Was it enough to be a key guy last year? "Well, no . . . obviously, I wanted to start. And, it didn't work out and I'm disappointed," Berringer would go on to say.

More Berringer: "I guess it all comes down to a difficult situation having two guys at the same place and we're both not going to get to play and start. That's how it all winds down."

What troubles me about the scenario of Brook Berringer this year is not the injury (a bum knee for most of October) as Frazier likely would have taken about the same number of snaps regardless of Berringer's health, rather the nature of how Nebraska celebrates its football heroes and their actions. I would hope that most of college football shares my disdain for the "what have you done for me lately" attitude.

It's my contention that most of this season of celebration has been lost on the urgency to repeat as National Champions. As if 1994 was a fluke and if the Husker don't kick 12 butts again, some insidious observer may create an asterisk that invalidates the entire campaign. Guess what? Nebraskans bought it.

Berringer stands as testimony to the minds' eye insufficiency of last year! He is forgotten in the exploits of Frazier. The 1994 season has vaporized in the anxiety of trying to do it again. Nobody speaks of what Berringer can do or how much he should be playing. Children across the state no doubt added Frazier's playing status to their nightly prayerful agenda. Their silent voices pleading to Him that Frazier stays healthy through the Fiesta Bowl. The wins this year are merely a means to maintain an artificial position in the Bowl Alliance Polls. Lawrence Phillips' purgatory has caused considerable depression, checked only by the mania brought about by trying to stay that much ahead of Ohio State and Florida.

Painful, isn't it? That in sports, we invest so much energy in preparing to win that none is left to either deal with defeat or enjoy victory. NSM

Jim Rose is the host of "SportsDay Mid-America with Jim Rose," a nightly radio call-in show.

By Gary Java

What A Glorious Year!

'If you're not blessed with living in this national championship state, you tell me what kind of year '95 has been for sports.'

IN RETROSPECT — THERE'S my one big word for this column, so those of you "bow ties" who are into big words, can stop reading — has 1995 been one of those "Sports Years For The Ages" or what?

From the Nebraska perspective, it's pretty tough to beat.

On Monday night, January 1, the Huskers not only exorcised the demons of Orange Bowls Past, they also did it right in front of that stooopid Ibis by playing "meat ball" all over those fine lads in green and orange in the last year of the Big Eight contract with the Orange Bowl. Pound, pound, pound went the new National Champions until the Hurricanes were sucking gas so bad they couldn't talk their trash anymore.

A story has it that when Tommie Frazier went back in to write Husker history, Warren Sapp — the largest coffee pot in the Big East — asked Frazier in the fourth quarter, "Where you been, Thomas?" The story has it that Frazier said something along the lines of "It's not where I've been, fat boy, it's where I'm goin'." I never asked Tommie if that was true — he'd probably never admit it, anyway — but as a CBS reporter once said: never let the truth get in the way of a good story.

So the new champs come home to the pageantry and praise they deserve and before they can unpack, this Ahman Green kid calls a press conference at Omaha Central and verbally commits to chase a Heisman at good 'ole Nebraska U. Cool!

Then the second week of "Champ-dom," the prodigal son returns: Nebraska's own Scott Frost from Wood River — the Steve Young-type lefty quarterback who could be runnin' the option with Ahman and DeAngelo Evans for a coupla' years. Quick — shoot the fattest calf (or something like that). As a CBS reporter once said: never let scripture get in the way of a reasonably adequate column.

Then, the second month, here come signatures on letter-of-intent day from what could prove to be one of the better group of football recruits Husker fans have ever seen. Wait 'till Tony Ortiz, Julius Jackson and Kareem Sears start flying around for the Blackshirts, along with Chad Kelsay, who's already contributing as a true freshman. And as '95 comes to a close, we're one win away from "bookending" the year with a repeat (and undisputed) national title. Take me now, Lord! It can't get much better, can it?

If you're not blessed with living in this national championship state, you tell me what kind of year '95 has been for sports.

San Francisco knocked the bolts out of another AFC champ. Did ya' ever think ya'd wish the Bills were back in the Super Bowl?

The owners and players certainly kept baseball's place in the history books by dragging their labor impasse right through what should have been spring training and opening day. Is it just me or does clueless Bud Selig look like Jerry Lewis' Nutty Professor?

America lost "The Mick" in '95. But No. 7 left us with a lot of the warmth and charm that made him one of baseball's best. And in his death, he heightened the awareness of the organ donor cause. His premature death may have added life to a lot of his fans.

How will we ever forget, that in 1995, the second greatest running back of all time: No. 32, The Juice, proved once again that all he ever needed was a little daylight?

Where will Michael Jordan's return to da' Bulls put 1995 in sports history?

Don't forget about ex-Cub Greg Maddux winning an unprecedented fourth straight Cy Young, and joining that Koufax guy in becoming the only other player to win back-to-back Cy's. I mean, is Maddux the quietest, most dominant player in sports, or what?

And how 'bout that No. 8 guy — Cal Ripken Jr.? Some day, your kids or grandkids are gonna ask you, in wonderment, about some the sports stuff that we've experienced this past year. It's your job to appreciate what we've witnessed and glorify it to future generations — to make this world a better place. (And God bless Tiny Tim.)

Happy Holidays! NSM

Gary Java is the host of KKAR "Sports Talk," a nightly radio call-in show and "Sportsline with Gary Java," a weekly cable television show.

NEBRASKA SPORTS MAGAZINE'S

ATHLETES OF THE YEAR COACH OF THE YEAR AWARDS • 1995

Each month, Nebraska Sports Magazine salutes an athlete in the state who competes on the youth, high school, collegiate or professional level, and best exemplifies the spirit of winning and achievement.

This year, as well as naming our second Coach of the Year (following Nebraska football coach Tom Osborne in 1994), we have also decided to honor two athletes who have achieved above and beyond expectations during the course of 1995.

Trophies by Anderson Awards

KEEPING EVERYTHING in Perspective

By Mike Watkins

When Ahman Green arrived at Nebraska to begin his freshman year this fall, he had more on his mind than new classes, meeting new friends and adjusting to new surroundings.

Green wanted to be a contender for the starting I-back job at some point in his first season as a Husker. But the move up Nebraska's depth chart didn't come about exactly as Green had imagined it.

Rather than earn the job based on his ability, Green got his first start six games into the season following the suspension of junior Heisman Trophy candidate Lawrence Phillips and a slew of injuries to others in the Cornhusker backfield.

But as has been the case ever since he strapped on a pair of shoulder pads and helped carry Omaha Central High School through three successful football seasons, Green has become accustomed to carrying a huge load — and excelling in the process.

ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

AHMAN GREEN
University of Nebraska Football

Photo by Eric Francis

"I knew I would get to play some this season, but to start as a freshman and lead the team in rushing was beyond anything I could have imagined," said Green, who picked Nebraska over perennial college powers, including Notre Dame, Michigan and Penn State.

"To be truthful, I wasn't quite as nervous as I thought I would be when I started against Missouri," he said. "I just realized I'm doing this for my team, and that I can't let it overwhelm me."

And he hasn't. Still, when it comes to performing, whether it's on the gridiron, the running track or in the weight room, nothing intimidates him.

As a senior at Central last year, Green not only led the state in rushing on the football field, he also bettered his 1993 performance at the Nebraska State High School Track Meet by winning the 100 and 200 meter races in record times.

Over the summer, Green committed himself to working even harder in the weight room, which ultimately helped him power through tackles and out-race defenders down the sidelines this fall for the Huskers.

"When it comes to something I want to do, I'm totally committed to it," said Green, who became the first freshman to start at I-back at Nebraska since Calvin Jones in 1991.

"I take things very seriously, including my schoolwork. When I'm in the weight room, it's all business. I dedicate myself to becoming a better student and athlete."

That commitment and consistency paid dividends in another arena last year, as he garnered an additional state title — in powerlifting. Green said he spent an average of three hours a day in the weight room to prepare himself.

His success at Nebraska this fall earned him the Big Eight's Offensive Newcomer and Freshman of the Year awards.

Starting just six games, he rushed for 1,086 yards and broke the Nebraska freshman rushing mark set by Jones in 1991. He came within 41 yards of breaking the Big Eight Conference rushing record for a freshman.

Considering the Big Eight's reputation for running the football, that sounds like quite an accomplishment. But not to Green. Like his runs for the end zone, he takes things in stride, and said he usually doesn't know how well he's done in a game until someone tells him later.

"I try not to get too caught up in myself and my game statistics," said the computer science major. "It's important for me to remain focused on the game and not worry too much about how many yards I've run for or my yards-per-carry average. I'm committed to my team and winning."

A hallmark to his belief in teamwork is his admitted acceptance and welcoming back of Phillips, who rejoined the team prior to the Iowa State game. Green admits that while he may have been the starter this year, next season may be another matter — especially if Phillips returns for his senior season.

"If he does come back next fall, it will be nice to have him here," Green said. "He's a good person to watch and learn from during practice and games, and he's been sort of mentor to me."

Whatever his future holds — he hasn't decided yet whether he'll run track for Nebraska in the spring — there's little doubt that based on his freshman season it will definitely be bright. While the allure of the NFL always has been a childhood dream, Green said he's at Nebraska for one reason: to get an education and a degree.

"That's something that my parents have always stressed to me, and it's something I strongly believe in. I want to finish my college education because I want to have something to fall back on when my football career is over, whether it's after college or after the NFL. Nothing is ever guaranteed." ■

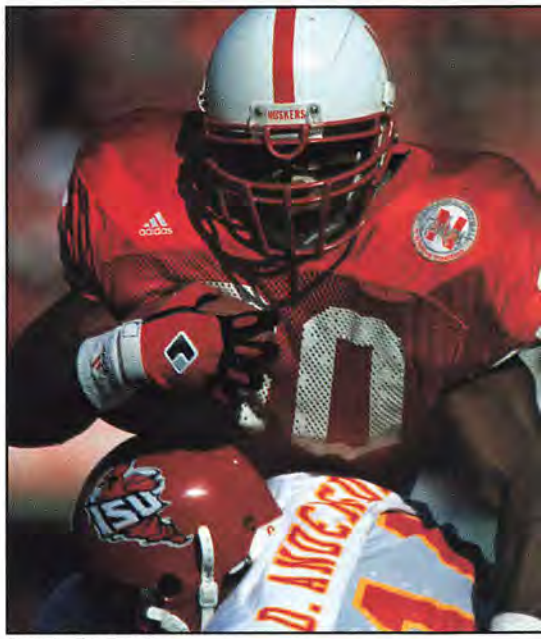
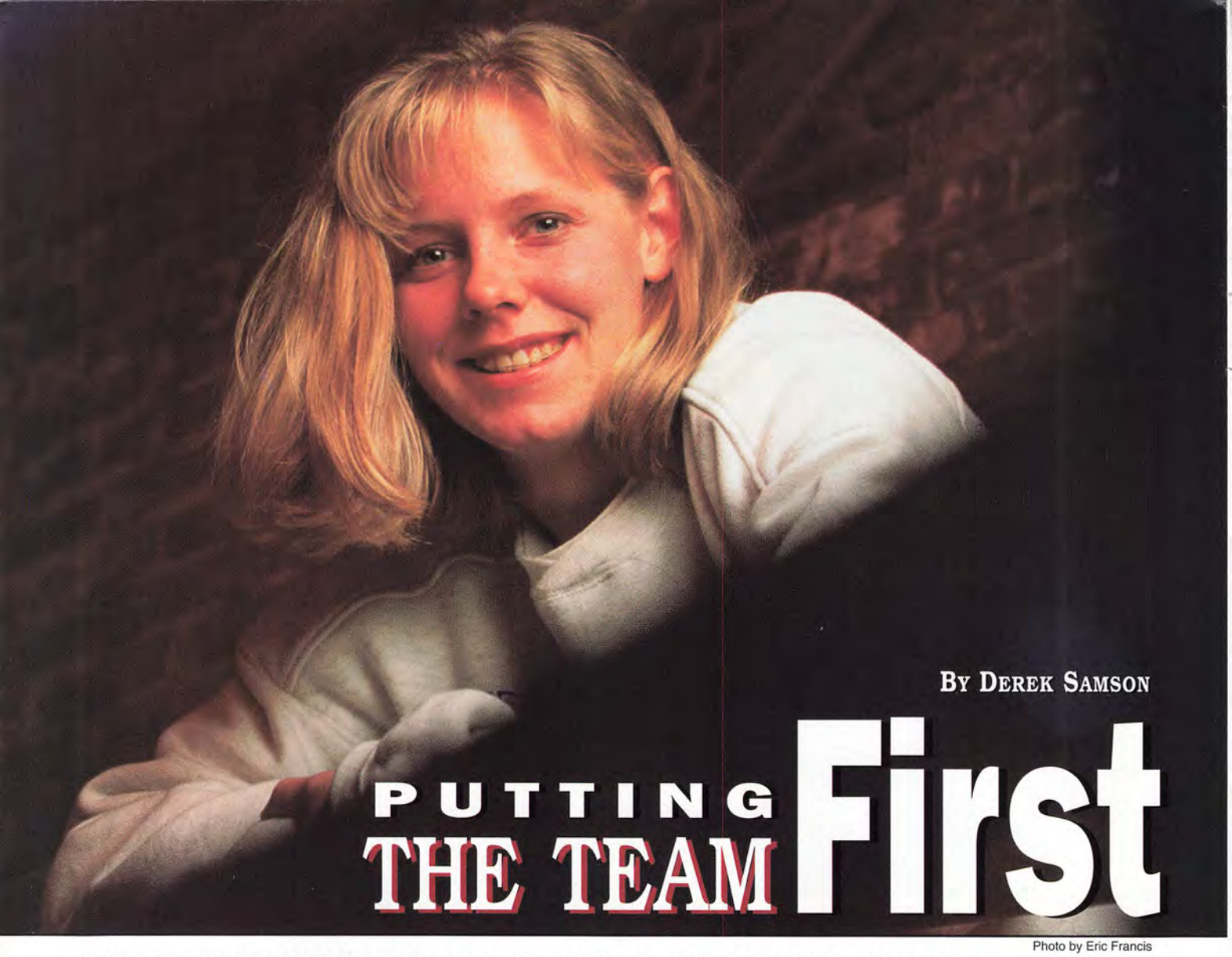


Photo by Eric Francis

Green, who coaches said "had the body of a grown man" when he arrived at Nebraska, punished opposing tacklers this season while averaging 7.7 yards a carry.



By Derek Samson

PUTTING THE TEAM First

Photo by Eric Francis

Allison Weston has definitely left her mark on Nebraska volleyball. The two-time All-American and Big Eight Player of the Year will graduate as the school's all-time leader in kills.

When Allison Weston broke Nebraska's all-time kill record Oct. 21 against Colorado, the senior middle blocker from Papillion-LaVista said she felt fortunate, not for the record, but that someone was keeping track.

"No one really said anything," said Weston, who recorded her 1,522th kill that night. "It would have never even dawned on me that I was close to it. I never even thought about it. It's flattering to get it, but it doesn't mean as much as most people think."

Not surprisingly, the record — previously held by Eileen Shannon and set in 1992 — was not on the top of Weston's list of goals.

"My only goal this year was a national championship," she said. "I guess reaching the Final Four is another goal, but that's just a stepping stone to getting the title. Last year, we should have got it, so that's the only thing we focused on this year."

(At press time, Nebraska was well on its way to earning a trip to the Final Four in Amherst, Mass., Dec. 14-16.)

Nebraska coach Terry Pettit said Weston's record was just another notch in an outstanding career for the three-time All-American.

"We try not to put limits on what we think people might accomplish," Pettit said. "We knew she was a great athlete and a very competitive person. She started here as a freshman and certainly by the end of her freshman year, she had given us indications of the type of player she would be.

"She's gotten better each year. The better the athlete, the longer they continue to get better. That's been the case with Allison."

Pettit said Weston's impact on the Nebraska volleyball program has been evident since her sophomore season.

"Offensively, Allison has been the player we've centered things on for the last three years," he said. "We've had a lot of different people out there with her, but the things that she is capable of doing has kind of dictated the type of offense we run. And that's been the case since she was a sophomore."

Last season, the Huskers were only one match away from the Final Four, but lost at home to Penn State.

Weston, who led Nebraska to its second consecutive Big Eight Conference

championship in late November and earned the Most Valuable Player Award for the second-straight time, said this year was different.

"We've got a lot more direction this year," Weston said. "Everybody knows their role. There is a lot of competition in practice and I would say it's probably 10 times more intense. It would be a huge disappointment if we didn't accomplish what we plan to. But everybody is filling in their role for us to accomplish those goals."

Weston's roles, along with those of fellow seniors Billie Winsett and Christy Johnson, are numerous for the top-ranked Huskers, who took a 26-match winning streak into the NCAA Tournament.

"First of all, I have to be a leader and there are a lot more expectations from me," she said. "I'm glad there are three of us. There is a lot of pressure on us. If we don't get to the Final Four, it will be because of something me or Christy or Billie didn't do."

Weston also thought the character of the 1995 Huskers was unique.

"We're a really close team," she said. "There's not any tighter friends around. I think we're also a lot more focused. We know what we can do and we're not going to give up until we do it."

Weston led by example in her final season for the Huskers, posting team-leading numbers in the regular season in kills (383) and blocks assisted (88). Her 212 digs were second only to Winsett's 237.

During her four-year career, Weston recorded 20 or more kills in 21 matches while leading Nebraska to victories in over 100 matches against just 14 losses.

"This year, I knew I had to be more consistent from attacking to defense," Weston said. "I wanted to improve my aggressiveness from the back row, as well as the front row. I was never as confident in my defense when I was in the back row. I just have to keep improving on it."

Pettit, who ranks fifth on the all-time list of college volleyball's all-time winningest coaches, agreed that Weston's biggest improvement was her defense.

"Her defense is significantly better," he said. "She is one of our better defensive people now. She reacts to the ball much better, defensively. She takes more pride in her defense. She's also passing more, but her defense is much better."

Not only does Weston have the school record for kills, but she also is third among the all-time career attacks leaders and fourth in career blocks. Her kill total ranks fourth best in Big Eight history.

"The summer before I came down to Lincoln, I was preparing myself to probably sit the bench for a year or two," Weston said.

"To go in as a freshman and be a major contributor was unbelievable to me. From what I was prepared for, to what really happened that first year was really something.

"I'm just thankful I've had the chance to move into this role." ■

ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

ALLISON WESTON
University of Nebraska Volleyball

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Second Chances

By Kevin Warneke

Mike Evans takes the unwanted and discarded and turns them into winners.

From every angle, Jay Rubin looks like the typical ball player Mike Evans brings to Bellevue University. When Rubin finished playing high school ball at Omaha Burke, nobody noticed. After a disappointing semester at a community college in Kansas, Rubin looked for a change of venue.

The interest underwhelmed him. "No one was interested," he said.

No one, that is, except Evans, who is entering his eighth year leading the Bruin baseball program. "He promised to give me a chance to play — and he did," said Rubin, a junior outfielder on the Bellevue squad.

Rubin has repaid his coach many times over, especially when the Bruins scratched their way to the 1995 NAIA national championship. In Bellevue's second series game, Rubin hit two triples and had five RBIs in the Bruins' 9-6 victory over Wilmington. He was named to the all-tournament team.

"He's a guy of hard knocks with a heart of gold," Evans said. "A lot of people overlooked Jay Rubin. He's hard to overlook now."

Ball players looking for second chances have found an open door at Bellevue University. They're Division I dropouts who either grew impatient waiting for their chance or couldn't measure up, or they're players who didn't draw enough attention as high school athletes but weren't ready to retire to the slow-pitch softball circuit.

"People know that Coach Evans doesn't care who you are or where you come from," Evans said. "I give people a chance to play."

To some, Evans' willingness to give the unwanted another chance mirrors Bellevue University's decision in 1989 to hire a coach down on his luck.

Photo by Eric Francis

Despite regular speculation about him making the jump to a coaching job on the Division I level, the 45-year-old Evans said Bellevue University suits him just fine.

Four years earlier, Evans, then a Husker assistant coach, left Nebraska under less-than-amicable circumstances. The Huskers were one out away from advancing to the College World Series but a bobbled ball sent Stanford University there instead. Evans resigned because of differences he had with NU Coach Mike Sanders.

Evans took a desk job, but couldn't shake baseball from his system. He successfully coached youth teams while waiting for his chance.

Bellevue University athletic director Jerry Mosser recalled that Evans, during his interview, talked about taking the Bruins to the NAIA World Series. "He was a proven winner," Mosser said. "I don't think we were taking a chance."

Either way, Evans' loyalty to Bellevue University doesn't waver. His name occasionally is batted around by the media when bigger baseball jobs

open up. Mosser said he's not concerned about Evans moving up and out. "He's kind of a homeboy. He likes it here."

Evans said he's going nowhere — except, hopefully, back to Sioux City, Iowa, so the Bruins can defend their national championship.

It could happen, Evans said. The Bruins return their entire outfield, two infielders, two catchers and five pitchers from last season's 57-13 season. Four newcomers on the pitching staff were selected in the major league draft.

"As far as talent, I'm not worried," Evans said. "Talent and cohesiveness are another matter. If everyone joins the family . . ."

Last season, the Bruins were family, their coach said. Players competed for the team first; personal glory took a backseat.

Evans said he expects his players to fall in line, even if his philosophy isn't always popular. No one stands apart from the others. "We have no spoiled ball players on our team." That means:

- No throwing bats or helmets.
- No cussing.
- Hustle in and hustle out. Seven seconds on the field, seven seconds off.
- No earrings or jewelry. "I don't care what the fads of today are," Evans said matter-of-factly.
- Everyone wears facemasks at the plate, even though "they may look ugly."

Rubin said, at first, he didn't know what to make of Evans' rules. Now, they're part of the routine. "We're a clean program," he said proudly.

Last season's team unity and cohesiveness doesn't mean Evans went through the year without a worry. Early on, the Bruins were winning but not in convincing fashion. Evans thought he was at fault. "I thought we're better than this. I couldn't get them going."

Finally, one of his players set Evans straight. "Coach, but we're winning."

Evans couldn't argue with the logic. He decided to trust his players' instincts and their talent. "I told them, 'I don't care how you win, just win.'"

They did — 30 times by one run. Fifty-seven times all together. "They were a great last-inning team," Evans said.

Evans said he became accustomed to his team's last-minute heroics. He wasn't accustomed, however, to the 2-1 loss to Birmingham-Southern in the series opener that left him momentarily stunned and knocked his team into the loser's bracket. Birmingham-Southern won with a two-run rally in the bottom of the ninth. "That's what we did to other people," Evans said.

Five games later, the Bruins stood atop the NAIA baseball heap. Mosser said he remembers the feeling that day with pride. "When I was standing up and cheering our national championship, that was probably one of the highlights of my life. This is something we'll always have."

Evans said the Bruin program grew stronger each season as Bellevue battled for a berth in the NAIA World Series. Those seasons were filled with many great moments. One game in 1989 stands out.

"When I do something, I do it 100 percent. Coaching baseball is something I really like to do."

-MIKE EVANS

COACH OF THE YEAR

MIKE EVANS
Bellevue University Baseball

Bellevue found itself down by two runs in the ninth inning of the District 11 finals against Kearney State College. The Antelopes had defeated Bellevue by 10 runs earlier that season. Kearney's coach had told Evans at the time not to worry about the loss; it takes awhile to compete at that level, he said.

Innocent words, but Evans and his Bruin squad used them as motivation. "We didn't want to wait. We figured the time was now."

Three runs in the bottom of the ninth gave Bellevue the district crown.

Mosser, who has been at the school since 1976, said Evans' devotion to the game is apparent. "His life is baseball — period. He lives and dies baseball. He loves it."

Not true, Evans explained. It only looks that way. His faith in God comes first; his family — he has custody of his four children — comes second.

"When I do something, I do it 100 percent," Evans said. "Coaching baseball is something I really like to do."

What Evans really would like next is to win a second NAIA championship. "I'm not satisfied." ■

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Multiple Titlists Dominate List of Fall Champions

Led by Lincoln East's eighth-straight boys tennis title, the Nebraska high school fall sports championships were dotted with repeat state champions.

Among the other multiple-repeat champions were Lincoln Southeast's girls cross country team, which won its seventh-straight Class A crown, four-time Class A champion Bellevue West in volleyball, Class B York's four-straight boys cross country titles and Millard North's three-straight gymnastics titles.

Football Playoffs Go On Without Falls City Sacred Heart

For the first time since 1989, the Class D-2 state football playoff championship game did not include Falls City Sacred Heart.

The Irish had their 87-game win streak come to an end in the state quarterfinals (see related story on page 6).

Humphrey St. Francis capitalized on Sacred Heart's absence. The Flyers, who lost to the Irish in the 1989, 1990, 1991 and 1993 state playoffs, defeated Butte 31-6 in the title game.

In Class A, Millard South upset heavily favored Millard North 35-0 in the semifinals, then came from behind to defeat Papillion-LaVista 28-24 on the Monarchs' home field in the finals.

Class B champion Lincoln Pius X (13-0) and Class C-1 Milford (13-0) both completed undefeated seasons while Dodge won its second-straight Class D-1 crown.

In the Class D-3 state title game, Wolbach's Kyle Grossart threw for six touchdowns to set a new six-man state record in his team's 62-47 win.

Results

Class A.....Millard South 28, Papillion-LaVista 24
Class B.....Lincoln Pius X 24, Aurora 7
Class C-1 .....Milford 21, Battle Creek 10
Class C-2.....Oakland-Craig 27, Hastings SC 13
Class D-1 .....Dodge 30, Orchard 25
Class D-2.....Humphrey St. Francis 31, Butte 6
Class D-3 .....Wolbach 62, Prague 47

Bahensky Helps Kearney Repeat Girls Golf Title

Senior Elizabeth Bahensky earned the all-class gold medal on a blustery Indianhead Golf Course in Grand Island to help Kearney earn its second-straight Class A title.

Erin Christensen won individual medalist honors in Class B and led Holdrege to its second title in three years.

Class A Results

Team Scoring – Kearney 659, Lincoln High 710, Norfolk 712, Lincoln Southeast 714, Scottsbluff 730, Omaha North 767, Millard South 781, Lincoln East 799, Columbus 810, Fremont 836, Millard West 881, Omaha Marian 896.

Individual Medalists

Elizabeth Bahensky, Kearney .....77-79—156
Susie Kiene, Lincoln High .....80-78—158
Sarah Sasse, Lincoln High.....78-80—158
Amy Roux, Kearney .....79-81—160
Jamie Schmidt, Lincoln SE .....78-86—164
Megan O'Dea, Kearney .....82-84—166
Carrie Medelman, Norfolk .....81-87—168
Mary Jane Mullin, Scottsbluff .....83-87—170

Photo by Eric Francis

In the Class A final, quarterback Josh Miller (left) scored two rushing touchdowns to lead Millard South to its first state football title. Papillion-LaVista recovered two of the Indians' four fumbles on the day, but couldn't get to this second-quarter bobble.

Photo by Eric Francis

Olga Osorio, Omaha North .....91-80—171
Chrissy Campbell, Lincoln SE.....87-86—173
Deb Zorn, Lincoln East .....84-91—175

Class B Results

Team Scoring – Holdrege 734, Minden 764, Columbus Scotus 768, Blair 802, Sidney 808, Columbus Lakeview 814, Grand Island Central Catholic 835, Wayne 836, York 838, Omaha Duchesne 840, Bennington 859, DeWitt Tri County 889.

Individual Medalists

Erin Christensen, Holdrege.....85-86—171
Sara Ferguson, Lexington.....84-88—172
Jill Smith, Blair.....89-89—178
Candi Blevins, Holdrege.....86-93—179
Amy Cimpl, Columbus Scotus.....93-86—179
Jodi Williams, Holdrege.....90-92—182
Andrea Nelson, Blair .....98-85—183
Katie Hoffman, Beatrice .....94-93—187
Kirsten McCarville, Sidney .....97-91—188
Andrea Malcolm, Minden .....95-93—188
Amber Quinn, GI Cent. Catholic..95-93—188
Virginia Kuhn, Minden .....96-95—191
Christina Yant, Minden.....94-97—191
Marti Keller, Cozad.....98-93—191
Jessica Mueller, Ogallala .....100-92—192

Lincoln East Tennis Team Overcomes Injuries

Sporting T-shirts that said "Eight Straight," Lincoln East's boys tennis team overcame a rash of injuries to win an unprecedented eighth-straight Class A team title.

In Class B, Grand Island Central Catholic won its second straight Class B title behind wins by its No. 1 and No. 2 doubles teams.

Class A Results

Team Scoring – Lincoln East 48.5, Millard South 42, Omaha Creighton Prep 37, Millard North 31.5, Fremont 28, Columbus 20, Lincoln Southeast 16, North Platte 16, Omaha Burke 14, Omaha Central 14, Grand Island 12, Omaha Westside 10, Norfolk 8, Bellevue East 6, Omaha North 6, Papillion-LaVista 6, Millard West 4, Omaha Northwest 4, Lincoln East 2, Omaha Bryan 2.

Title Winners

No. 1 Singles	Jay Bemis, Millard South
No. 2 Singles	John Heine, Omaha Creighton Prep
No. 1 Doubles	Lance Mills-Bill Bemis, Millard South
No. 2 Doubles	Mike Roth-Kurt Jonske, Lincoln East

Class B Results

Team Scoring – Grand Island Central Catholic 51, Lincoln Pius X 40, Hastings 34, Ralston 33, Elkhorn Mount Michael 30, Waverly 24, Alliance 22, Crete 16, York 16, Omaha Roncalli 12, Omaha Skutt 10, Adams Central 8, Brownell Talbot 8, Lexington 8, Beatrice 6, Holdrege 6, Kearney Catholic 6, McCook 6, Valley 6, Scottsbluff 4, South Sioux City 4, Nebraska City 2, Omaha Gross 2.

Title Winners

No. 1 Singles .....Nick Vuko, Lincoln Pius X
No. 2 Singles .....Jon French, Hastings
No. 1 Doubles .....C.J.Cowgill-Dan Schreurs, Grand Island Central Catholic
No. 2 Doubles.....Koty Cowgill-Jeff Riley, Grand Island Central Catholic

Lincoln Southeast Girls Capture Seventh-Straight Cross Country Title

Kelly Lindsey won her third-straight all-class gold medal while Lincoln Southeast's girls took home their seventh-straight Class A team title. Kearney's Brandon Jessop and Marcus Witter ran to a one-two finish to lead the Bearcat boys to their first cross-country team title since 1977.

In Class C, Gretna senior John Grebe upset Morrill senior Aaron Carrizales, who was bidding to become the first four-time boys state champion.

BOYS

Class A Results

Team scoring – Kearney 75, Bellevue West 86, Lincoln Southeast 97, Lincoln Northeast 103, Omaha Creighton Prep 154, Millard

West 157, Papillion-LaVista 169, Lincoln High 190, Norfolk 192, Lincoln East 223, Bellevue East 253, Omaha Burke 269.

Top Ten Finishers

Brandon Jessop, Kearney.....16:12
Marcus Witter, Kearney 16:14
Dana Carne, Omaha North 16:16
Dan Rempe, Omaha Creighton Prep ...16:36
Thor Esbensen, Lincoln Southeast 16:52
Eric Wagoner, Papillion-LaVista 16:53
Scott Schaefer, Millard North 16:53
Ben Schluckebier, Lincoln Northeast ...16:54
Jason Settles, Norfolk.....16:55
David Ellis, Grand Island.....17:02

Class B Results

Team scoring – York 47, Scottsbluff 62, Grand Island Northwest 68, Plattsmouth 70, Norris 76, Gering 90, Elkhorn 114, Lincoln Pius X 139, South Sioux City 148, Hastings 150, Ogallala 150, Blair 200.

Top Ten Finishers

Seth Stewart, Plattsmouth 16:19
Jeremy Collins, York 16:35
Anthony Alt, Waverly 16:40
Eric Calkins, Chadron 17:06
Joel Phipps, Scottsbluff 17:06
Brandon Seifert, GI Northwest 17:14
David Stott, Scottsbluff 17:19
Todd Tripple, Gering 17:23
T.J. McMillan, Ogallala 17:23
Monte Crunk, Nebraska City 17:24

Class C Results

Team scoring — Elkhorn Mount Michael 45, Minden 61, Pierce 82, Grand Island Central Catholic 90, Gretna 101, Wayne 101, Centura 121, Fairbury 130, Broken Bow 131, Gothenburg 131, Auburn 155, Hershey 168.

Top Ten Finishers

John Grebe, Gretna 16:51
Aaron Carrizales, Morrill 17:14
Mark Sibbitt, Gretna 17:18
Spencer Stednitz, Wayne 17:18
Nick Perkins, Centura 17:27
Shannon Stenger, North Bend 17:37
Chad Morrison, Arlington 17:38
Josh Arends, Albion 17:40
Wayne Anglemyer, Ord 17:49
J.D. Cook, Mitchell 17:50

Class D Results

Team scoring – Malcolm 35, Wahoo Neumann 49, Loup City 56, Crofton 65, Lincoln Christian 102, Ravenna 113, Bertrand 118, Wisner-Pilger 125, Cambridge 132, Gibbon 146, Bridgeport 177, Culbertson 185.

Top Ten Finishers

Bryan Williams, Arcadia 17:05
Heath Smith, Wahoo Neumann 17:22
Scott Schneider, Axtell 17:31
Jesse Day, Malcolm 17:32
Joe Williams, Malcolm 17:37
Randy Krahulik, Loup City 17:46
Cory Spotanski, Loup City 17:46
Aaron Hraban, Wahoo Neumann 17:52
Steve Einspahr, Eustis-Farnam 17:56
Andy Cronin, Ravenna 17:57

GIRLS

Class A Results

Team scoring – Lincoln Southeast 55, Grand Island 82, Millard North 90, Papillion-LaVista 125, Lincoln East 143, Millard South 146, Lincoln Northeast 165, Norfolk 186, Omaha Marian 213, Fremont 250, Omaha Burke 273, Millard West 280.

Top Ten Finishers

Kelly Lindsey, Millard North 15:57
Paige Brown, Omaha North 16:04
Jessica Sefzik, Millard South 16:05
Christy Linnell, Papillion-LaVista 16:12
Betsy Hoefer, Millard North 16:19
Amie Finkner, Kearney 16:30
Sara Farrand, Grand Island 16:31
Monica Kepler, Lincoln High 16:32
Emily Anderson, Lincoln Southeast 16:38
Amy Webb, Grand Island 16:39

Class B Results

Team scoring – Aurora 29, York 53, Plattsmouth 56, Scottsbluff 87, Elkhorn 101, Lincoln Pius X 108, Omaha Roncalli 110, South Sioux City 126, Alliance 135, Schuyler 153, Firth Norris 165, McCook 204.

Top Ten Finishers

Kathryn Handrup, Aurora 16:18
Mary Livengood, Omaha Roncalli 16:25
Stacie Handrup, Aurora 16:30
Amy Parsons, Plattsmouth 16:34
Becky Goltz, Plattsmouth 16:38
Sarah Handrup, Aurora 16:42
Laura Collins, York 16:47
Andrea Tietmeyer, York 16:51
Nikki Tierney, South Sioux City 16:54
Audrey Arellano, Scottsbluff 17:00

Class C Results

Team scoring – Wayne 50, Imperial 51, Kimball 51, Gothenburg 89, Auburn 93, Arlington 103, Syracuse 105, Columbus Scotus 108, Fairbury 135, Adams Central 147, Grand Island Central Catholic 155, Albion 216

Top Ten Finishers

Sara Kinney, Wayne 16:29
Monica Barger, Imperial 16:30
Jane Koehler, Pierce 16:53
Renee Boman, Columbus Scotus 17:02
Liz Biehl, Adams Central 17:03
Stephanie Hrabik, Syracuse 17:04
Susannah Simmons, Kimball 17:13
Summer Morrison, Arlington 17:18
Laurel Mackey, Broken Bow 17:21
Brande Johnson, Gothenburg 17:25

Class D Results

Team scoring – Geneva 38, Wahoo Neumann 46, Wisner-Pilger 57, Malcolm 79, Culbertson 85, Norfolk Catholic 105, Hastings St. Cecilia 121, Benkelman 126, Gibbon 140, Crofton 158, Superior 171, Grant 177.

Top Ten Finishers

Amber Fairbanks, Geneva 16:13
Darcy Preston, Lyons-Decatur 16:59
Toni Bockelman, Wisner-Pilger 17:01
Jill Rippen, Culbertson 17:02
Elly Hoarty, Geneva 17:12
Amy Semrad, Wahoo Neumann 17:24
Heather Case, Benkelman 17:30
Carol Simons, Wahoo Neumann 17:34
Suzanne Richart, Norfolk Catholic 17:35
Julie Mitchell, Ravenna.....17:37

Photo by Eric Francis

Papillion-LaVista's Mitch Webb couldn't hold on to the football after this first-quarter reception. Millard South's Jeff Killeen (shown behind Webb) recovered the fumble for the Indians.

Bellevue West Wins Fourth-Straight Volleyball Crown

Bellevue West needed three games to do it, but the Thunderbirds fought past Papillion-LaVista to win their sixth state volleyball title in the last seven years.

They finished the season 38-1 and ranked No. 2 in the nation by USA Today.

Columbus Scotus avenged a pair of title game losses to Grand Island Central Catholic in 1994 and 1995 by winning the Class C-1 championship.

In Class D-1, Kim Behrends threw down a state record 28 kills to lead Chappell to a state title in its first state tournament appearance.

Class A
Bellevue West defeated Papillion-LaVista, 11-15, 15-11, 15-4

Class B
Blair defeated Ogallala, 15-7, 15-8

Class C-1
Columbus Scotus defeated Grand Island Central Catholic, 15-5, 15-9

Class C-2
Howells defeated Laurel, 6-15, 15-7, 15-8

Class D-1
Chappell defeated Sargent,15-10, 8-15, 15-9

Class D-2
Lewiston defeated Shickley, 15-13, 15-10

Hickman Pitches Monarchs To State Softball Title

Papillion-LaVista took home its first state high school softball title behind the pitching of junior Julie Hickman, who retired 13 straight batters in a 6-1 win over Ralston at Seymour Smith Field.

The Monarchs won 15 of their last 17 games to finish the season 34-10.

Mustangs Make It Three Straight in Gymnastics

Millard North captured its third straight team title and Kearney sophomore Bree Dority won the all-around gymnastics championship at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

The Mustangs' lone individual champion was freshman Carrie Kreifels, who won the uneven bars.

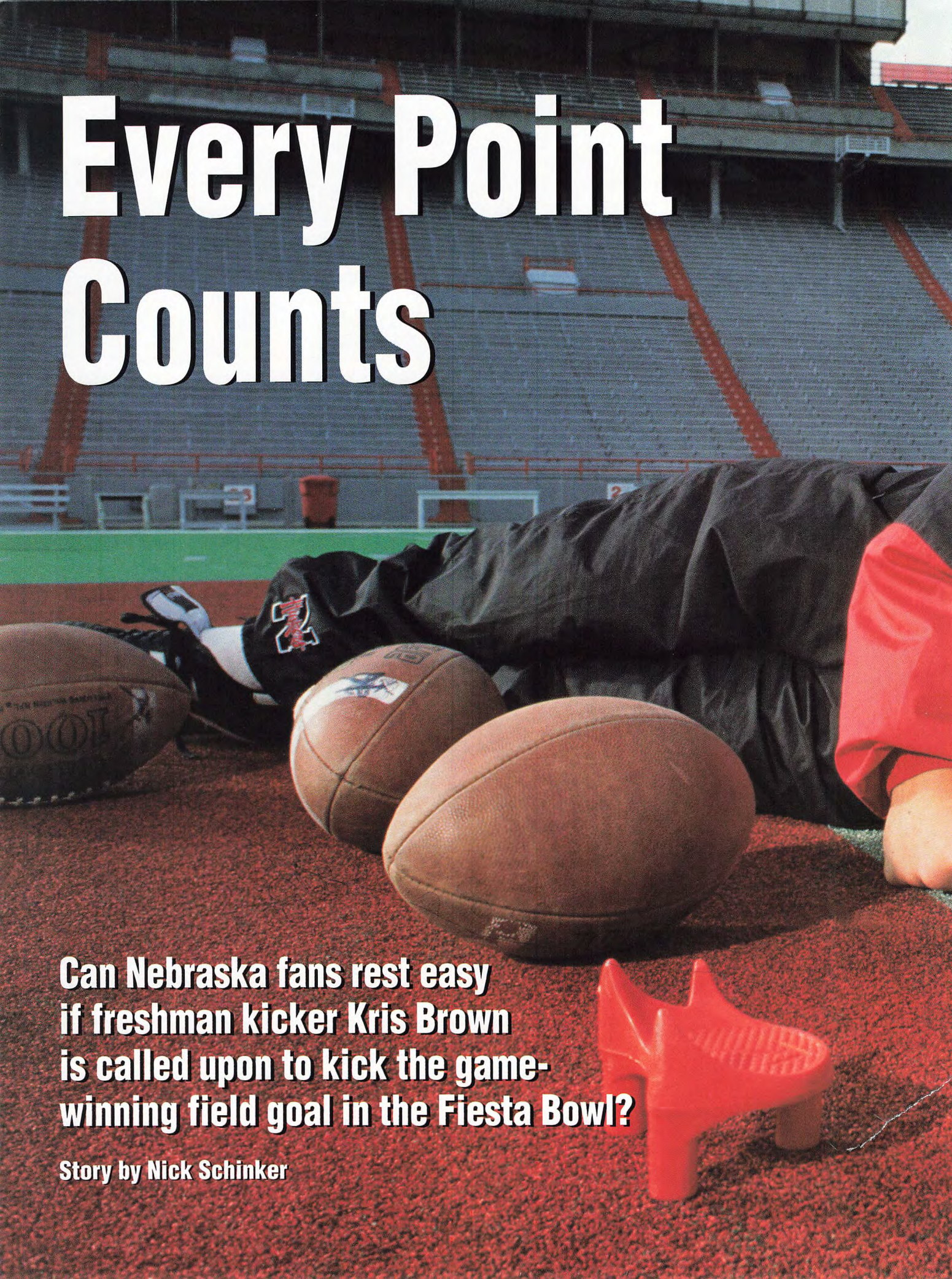
Results
Team scoring – Millard North 146.7, Lincoln Southeast 146.2, Omaha Burke/Northwest 143.8, Lincoln Northeast 143.2.

Individual Champions
All-Around .....Bree Dority, Kearney
Uneven Bars ....Carrie Kreifels, Millard North
Vault .....Bree Dority, Kearney
Balance Beam .....Gina Buerrero, Omaha Burke/Northwest
Floor Exercise .....Lisa Bukacek, Lincoln SE

Photo by Bob Berry

Sophomore Kelli Brummer helped Blair win the school's first state volleyball championship. The Bears upset previously-undefeated Ogallala, 15-7, 15-8 in the Class B final at Lincoln's Pershing Auditorium.

Every Point Counts



Can Nebraska fans rest easy if freshman kicker Kris Brown is called upon to kick the game-winning field goal in the Fiesta Bowl?

Story by Nick Schinker

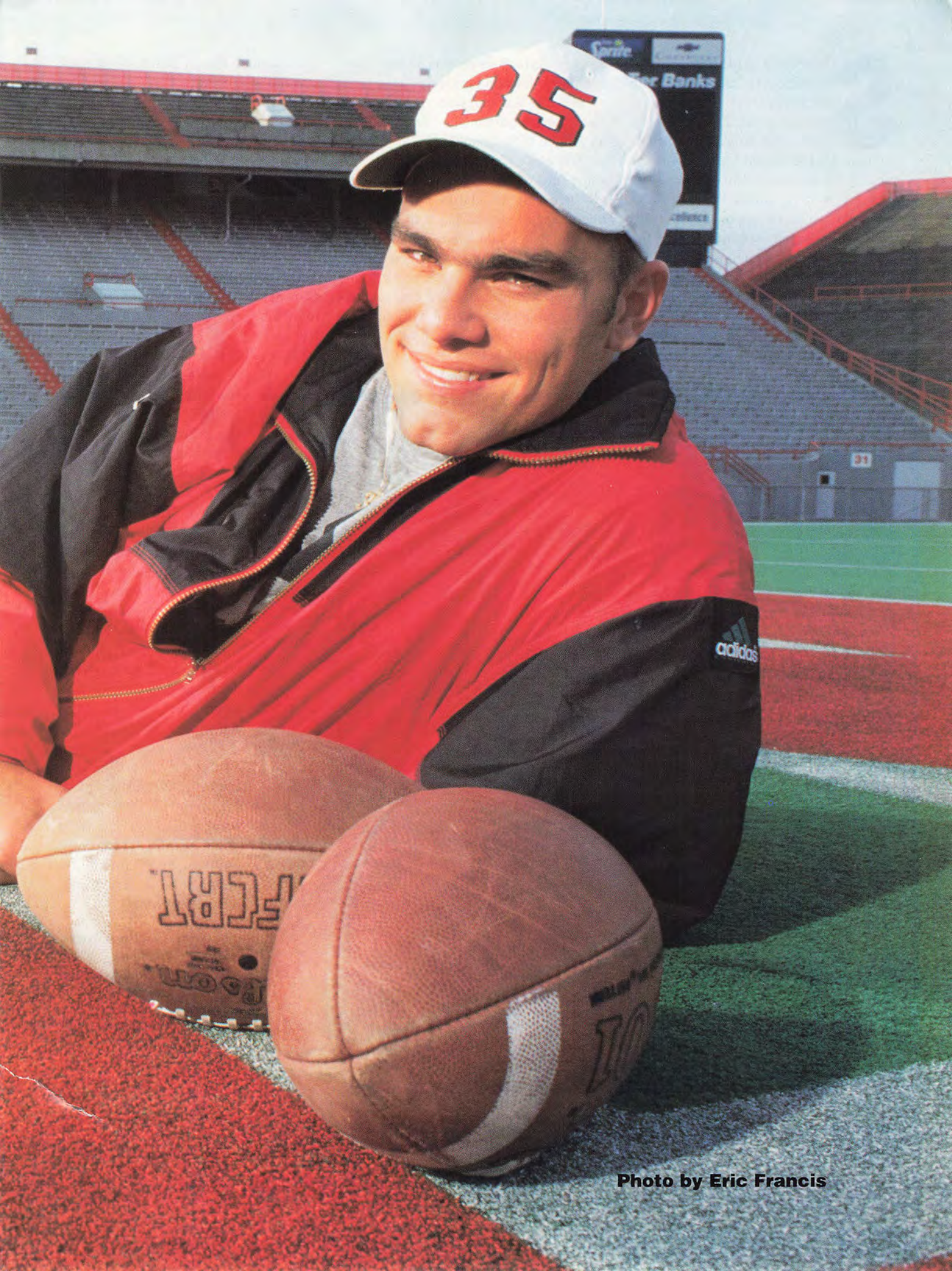


Photo by Eric Francis

Stick in a videotape. Fast forward to Jan. 2. The University of Nebraska is playing in the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl. The Huskers and their opponent have traded touchdowns for nearly 60 minutes, and Nebraska is trailing by two points. The Huskers have the ball on the opponent's 35-yard line. There's four seconds left in the game. The field goal unit is sent in. The hope of an undefeated season and a second consecutive national championship falls squarely on the shoulders of — a freshman?

Don't cross your fingers just yet. Kicker Kris Brown has more than beginner's luck on his side.

He has experience. Brown got plenty of it in Southlake, Texas, where he went to high school.

Southlake Carroll High School, situated in a community of 2,800 people northwest of the Dallas Forth-Worth International Airport, has a tradition of winning that would make Tom Osborne smile. Before advancing to Division 4-A action last season, the Carroll football team had posted seven consecutive 10-0 regular seasons. This fall, another undefeated season was well on its way into the record books. During 17 years at the school, Coach Bob Ledbetter has a record of 208-38-3.

A share of the recent victories belong to Brown. The team was 32-0 his sophomore and junior years, winning back-to-back state 3-A titles in 1992 and 1993. Brown was instrumental in his team's success, but not just as the place kicker. He also was the starting quarterback.

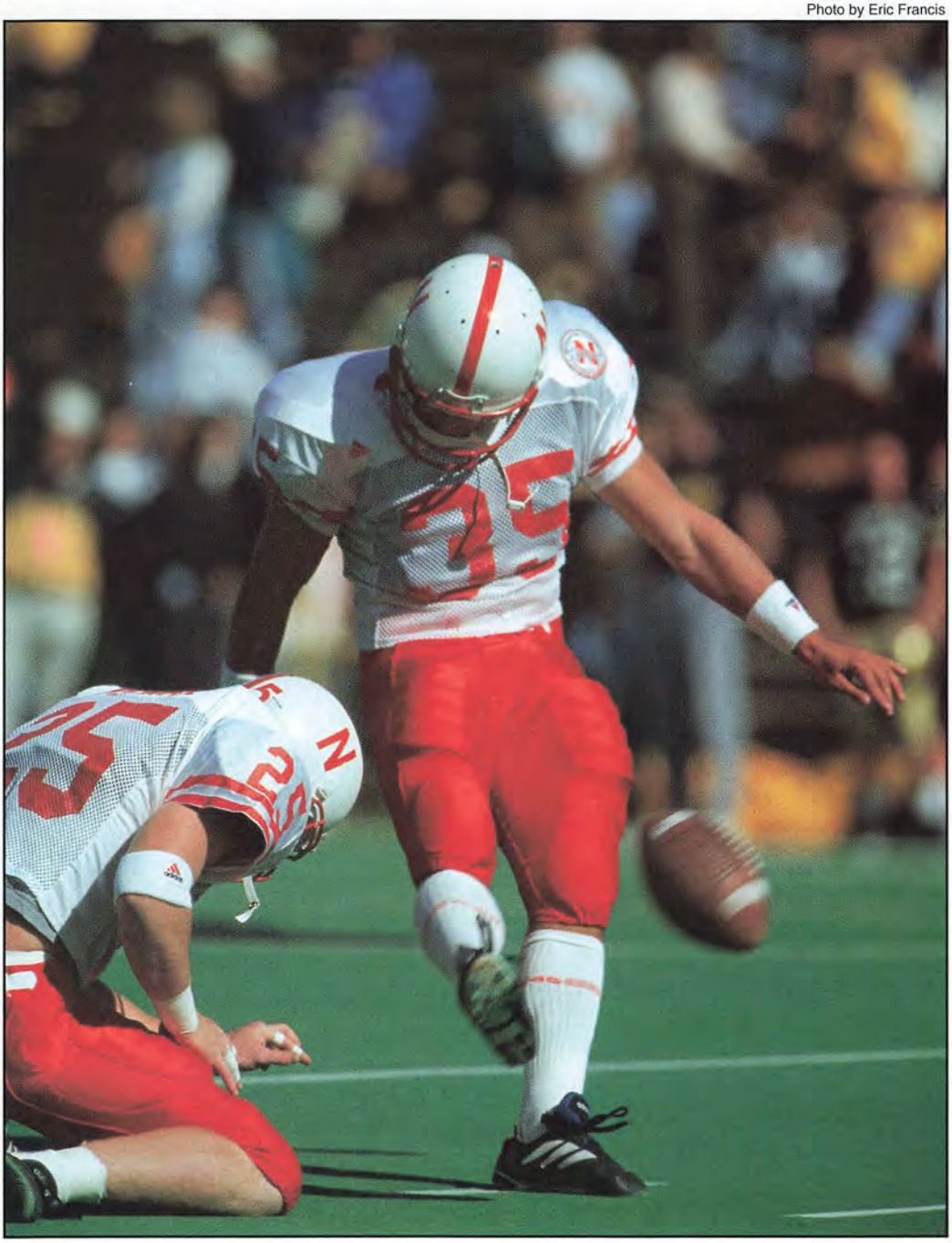
The school was vying for a third-straight title last season when a concussion early in a playoff game ended Brown's senior season — and the winning.

Instead of that day, Ledbetter likes to talk about the game prior to Brown's last, the one where Carroll beat Waxahachie, the No. 2 team in the state.

"Kris was having a great game," Ledbetter recalled. "He was 12 of 15 passing, I believe, and he kicked four field goals, including a whopper that was 49 or 50 yards. Then he threw a big pass to win the game in the last minute. That's the game I think of when I think about Kris. That was probably the best game he had in high school."

This year, Brown enjoyed a record-setting season as Nebraska's place kicker. His 97 points scored on 13 of 16 field goals and 58 of 61 extra point kicks established a new school freshman scoring record.

Photo by Eric Francis



Brown (shown here with holder Jon Vedral) made 13 field goals this season, just one shy of tying Greg Barrios' school record, set during the 1990 season. His 58 successful point-after kicks did surpass the previous Nebraska record of 57 by Barrios during the 1989 season.

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Brown (shown here carrying the ball) quarterbacked Southlake Carroll High School to back-to-back undefeated seasons and state titles his sophomore and junior seasons. A chance for a third straight state championship ended when a concussion knocked Brown out of a playoff game.

At Michigan State (opposite page), Brown made his longest field goal of the year — a 47-yarder.

Photo provided by Hobert Brown

Four times this season (against Michigan State, Washington State, Colorado and Oklahoma), he made three field goals in a game.

When anyone mentions pressure, the 6-foot, 190-pound kicker reminds them about two of his successful field goals during a huge win on the road.

"The ones that help me are the ones I made in Colorado," he recalled. "We were up 31-21, just 10 points. The offense doesn't get the ball in the end zone and I go in and put us up 34-21. I kicked again and we went up 37-21. Being up by more than two touchdowns, I think, was a really big factor in that game."

One prerequisite to being a great kicker is to have a good leg and a bad memory.

"If you make a mistake, you've got to blow it off," said Brown, who missed his first extra point of the season and came back minutes later to successfully complete his first field goal. "You just have to relax, go out and find a way to win. It doesn't matter how pretty or how ugly it is, just get the job done."

Interviewed following an afternoon practice in 30-degree temperatures and a wicked north wind, Brown drank from a cup of hot chocolate between answers. Polite almost to the point of embarrassment, the 18-year-old (he'll turn 19 Dec. 23) punctuated his replies with more "sirs" than if he'd just been pulled over by a cop.

"That sounds like Kris all right," Ledbetter said, laughing. "He's a great kid, a special kid. He meant a lot to our program, not only as the kicker and quarterback, but as a team leader. He's the type who had a lot of athletic ability but who also is good with his teammates. Always a positive outlook. He's one of those kids you enjoy coaching and just being around."

The coach and Brown maintain their friendship by telephone two or three times a week. Ledbetter said they talk every Thursday, prior to Southlake Carroll's game on Friday. And again on Saturday, to find out how the team did. "Sometimes he calls on Sundays, just to let me know how Nebraska did."

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NU Opponent	Made	Missed
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Michigan State	22, 47, 20	—
Arizona State	—	—
Pacific	—	30
Washington State	33, 22	20
Missouri	—	—
Kansas State	—	—
Colorado	25, 36, 37	—
Iowa State	38	—
Kansas	—	—
Oklahoma	31, 27, 35	45

THROUGH THE UPRIGHTS

Kris Brown made 13 of 16 field goal attempts during the regular season and was 58-for-61 on his extra point kicks.

Ledbetter follows the Huskers closely. And he has no doubt his former quarterback and kicker can handle the stress of Division I football.

"The one thing people may not realize about Kris," Ledbetter said, "is that he's been in a lot of big ball games in high school. We've played in Texas Stadium (home to the Dallas Cowboys) before 25,000 or 30,000 people.

"Now, I know that's nothing to compare with coming out of the tunnel at Nebraska. It's a whole different world. But if ever a college freshman has been around who had the maturity to handle this, Kris is the one."

The process began the first time Brown played football, in the seventh grade. Prior to that, he played soccer.

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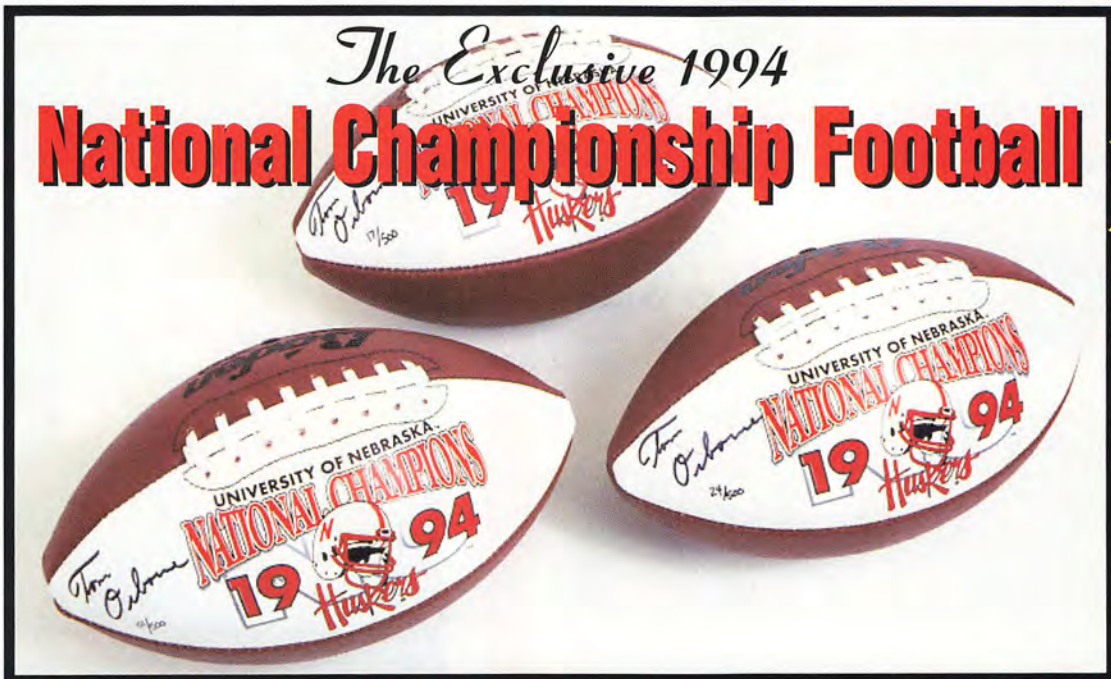

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He recalled his first football team, and the day the coach asked if anyone knew how to kick. Brown said he raised his hand. To this day, he kicks soccer-style.

Eager to compete, Brown also played baseball and basketball and ran track in high school. He earned first-team all-district honors as a sophomore and junior outfielder for Carroll.

"I enjoy all sports," he said. "Football and baseball, I probably enjoy more than the others. But I always have to be doing something."

His maturity on the football field came with quite a few honors. He was named first-team, all-district, all Northeast Tarrant County and all-area by the Dallas Morning News and the Fort Worth Star-Telegram as a kicker his senior year. He was selected honorable-mention all-state by The Associated Press and the Texas Sportwriters Association.

There is a tremendous difference, however, in the effort he puts into his kicking now compared to high school,

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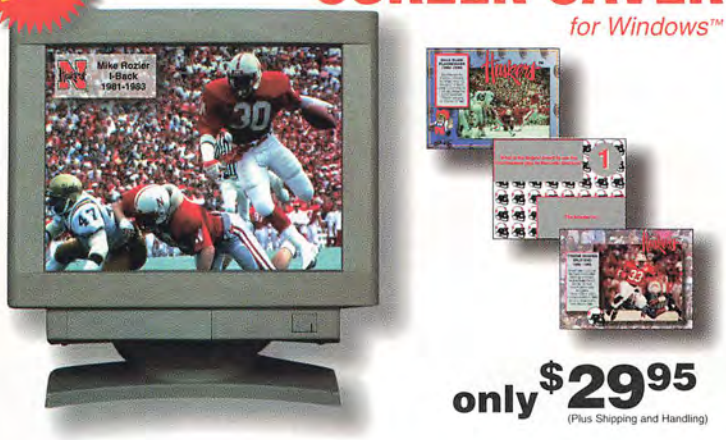

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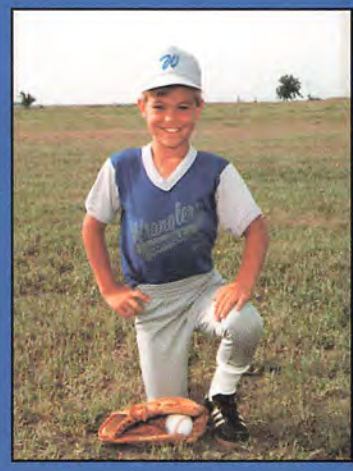
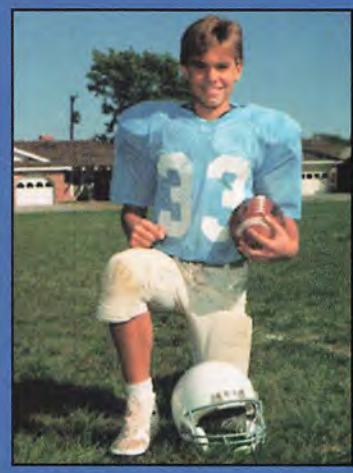
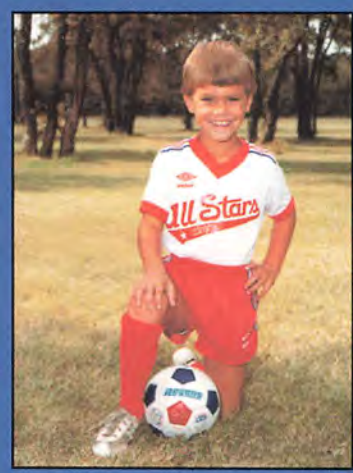
Brown's Early Years







Photos provided by Hobert Brown

Brown's participation in youth sports set the stage for a successful high school athletic career. In addition to his success in football, Brown was also an outfielder on the baseball team and started at guard on the basketball team.

"The one thing people may not realize about Kris is that he's been in a lot of big ball games in high school. We've played in Texas Stadium (home to the Dallas Cowboys) before 25,000 or 30,000 people."

Bob Ledbetter
Head football coach
Southlake Carroll High School

Brown said. "At the beginning of this season, I was taking between 50 and 75 practice kicks a week. If we spent 15 or 20 minutes a week in high school on kicking, I was lucky."

Brown's longest field goal of the regular season came from 47 yards out. Keith Jackson, television commentator for ABC Sports, noted during coverage of the Nebraska-Colorado game Oct. 28 that he had seen Brown "hit some 55-yarders during warm-ups." Told about the comment, Brown said that was business as usual, not the altitude in Boulder.

"Usually I can hit from 55 yards," he said. "My longest? Well, you don't like to say because you don't want the other team to know your limit, but I've hit from 65 yards."

A 65-yard limit? Sounds more like a highway speed than a field goal.

"It was only practice," he replied. "It really doesn't count."

Brown said he doesn't miss playing quarterback. "I'm happy right now. I wanted to come here and concentrate on my kicking. I want to see how good I can really become. God has blessed me with a talent not many people are blessed with. I plan to enjoy it while I can.

"If you asked me two years ago if I ever dreamed I'd be in the position I'm in, I'd have said no. That I'm going to be up here playing with Tommie Frazier and Lawrence Phillips? I wouldn't have believed it. It's so much like a dream I still wonder sometimes when I'm going to wake up."

A secondary education major, Brown would like to teach and coach football, either at the high school or college level after graduation. "In Texas," he added quickly. "If I'm going to coach, that's where I'd want to be."

Specifically, at Southlake Carroll. That image also provoked a chuckle from his 54-year-old former coach.

"He told me about that," Ledbetter said. "Kris does have a great rapport with young kids. I think he would make an excellent coach and teacher anywhere. For that matter, he'd be a success at whatever he chooses."

Let's get back to that videotape at the beginning of the story. The teams line up. Nebraska center Aaron Graham takes his position over the ball. Brown steps back to await the hold. The ball is snapped . . .

What does he think would happen?

"Basically, I'd just go out there and do what I've been doing all year long," Brown said. "The way I see it, everything happens for a reason.

"That's just the way life is." ■

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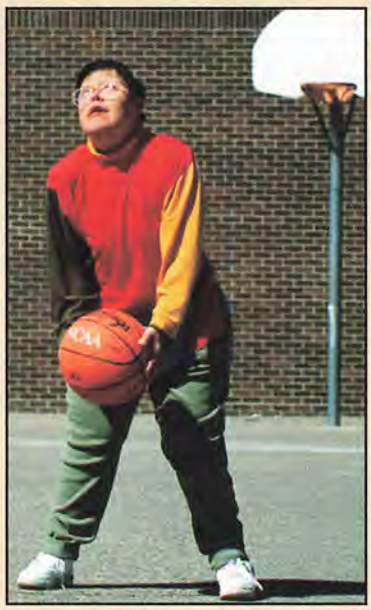

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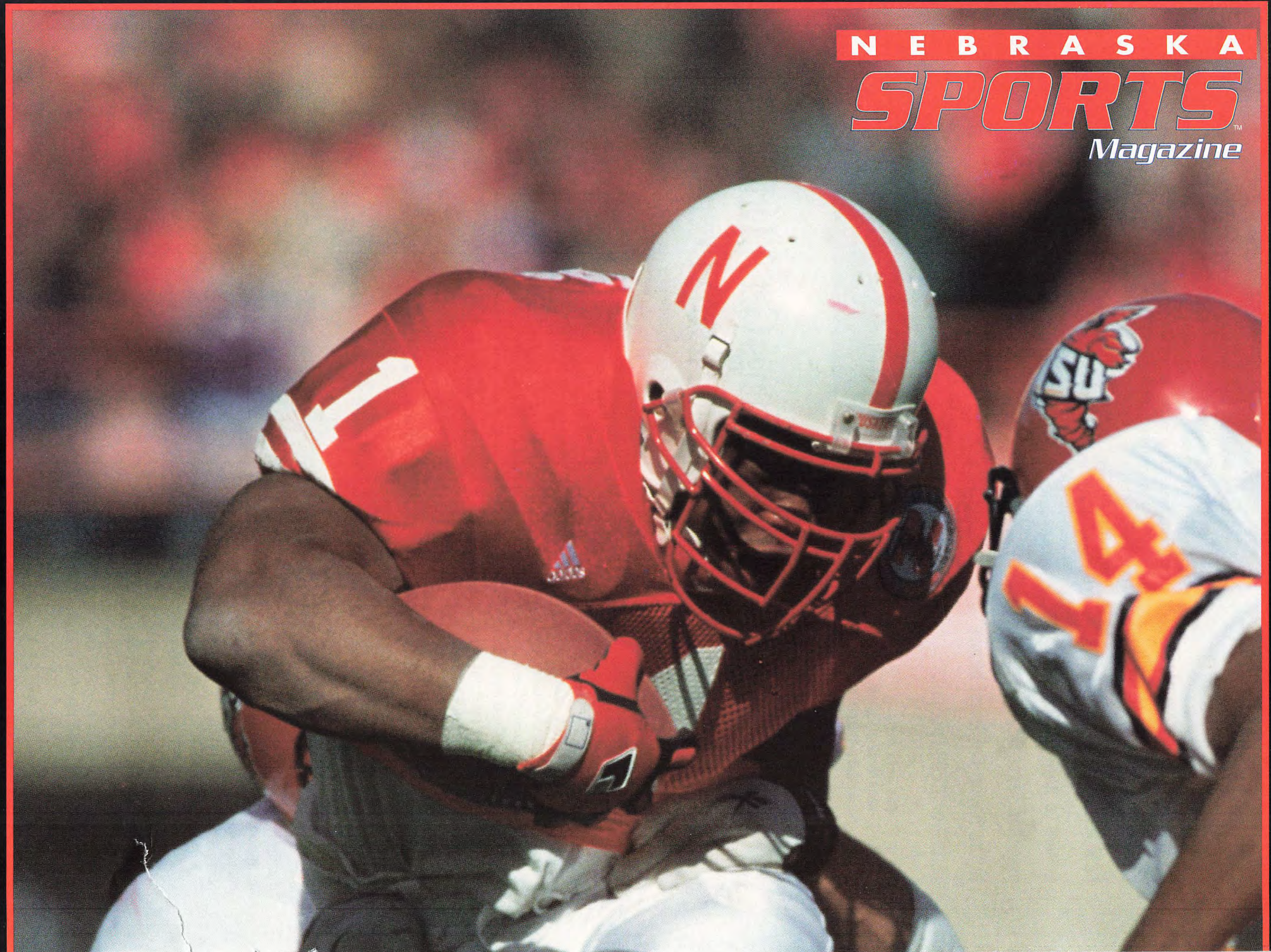
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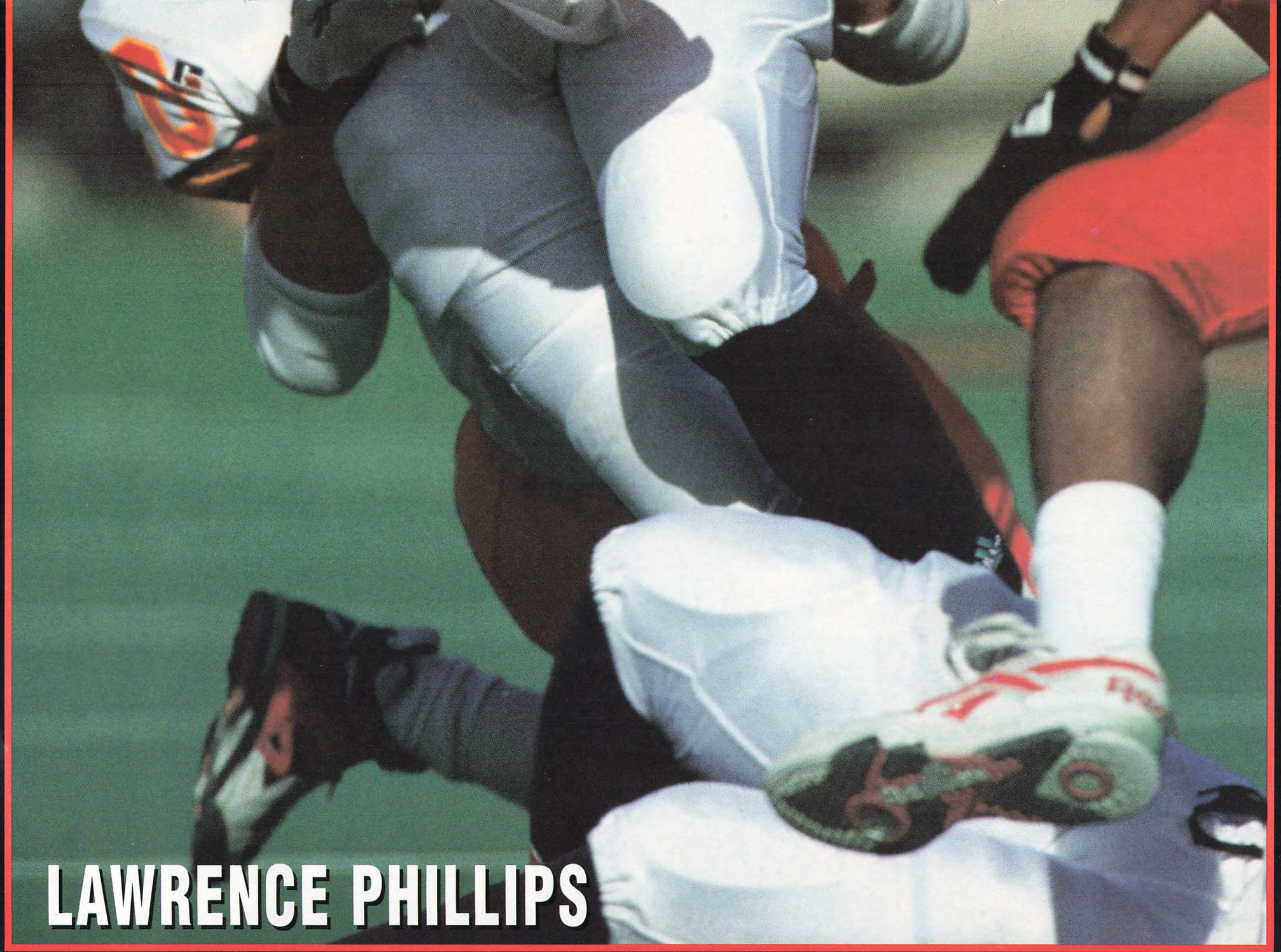


Photo by Eric Francis

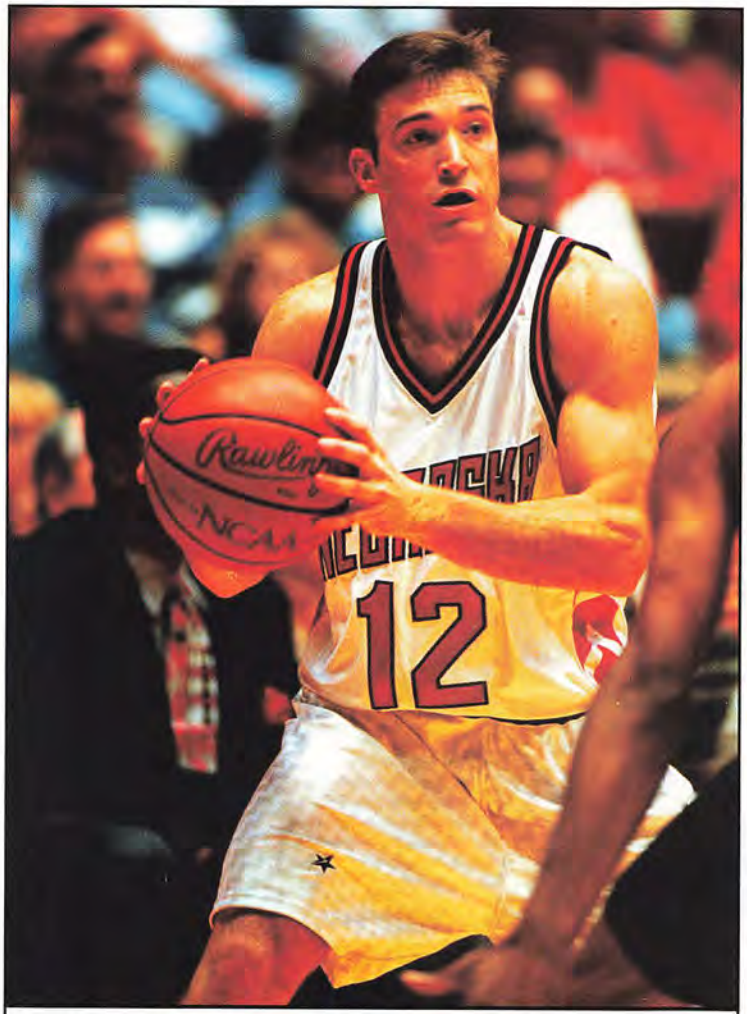
C24
12

Making His MARK

Tom Wald wants to be remembered for more than three free throws

STORY BY BRIAN HILL
PHOTOS BY BOB BERRY

Five-tenths of a second remain. Tom Wald calmly steps up to the line and makes not one, not two, but three free throws to send the game into overtime. Nebraska would go on to beat 15th-ranked Michigan State 96-91 in overtime.



Wald made an immediate impression last year with his tireless hustle and late-game heroics, which included stealing an inbounds pass to preserve a 74-72 win over the College of Charleston in the San Juan Shootout.

For followers of Husker basketball, that thrilling performance is the defining moment of Wald's career. While the senior guard understands the significance of his accomplishment, he strives to add to his legacy.

"That was a great moment," Wald said. "I'm going to remember that the rest of my life, but I don't want everybody to remember that as Tom Wald."

Wald would gladly put personal glory aside for team success, which was in short supply the second half of the 1994-95 season, when the Huskers lost 13 of their last 20 games after an 11-1 start.

A part-time starter and the third-leading scorer on last year's team, Wald has graciously accepted a backup role behind highly touted freshman Tyronn Lue.

"It (starting) means nothing to me," Wald said. "I told Coach Nee that early in the year. He was having to face a dilemma. Tyronn Lue is a tremendous point

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With freshman Tyronn Lue getting the nod from Coach Danny Nee to run the Husker offense this year, Wald may find himself spending more time sitting than playing.

guard. He's going to be a great pro player some day, no doubt in my mind.

"I didn't give up. I didn't say I bequeath that spot to him. He earned it. It means nothing because I realize that it's just a game, and I can still give good quality minutes coming off the bench."

Wald was selected to the Big Eight Conference "All-Bench" team as a junior. His efforts as a backup included scoring 18 points — 9 for 9 at the free throw line — in the Michigan State game, 21 points against Delaware State and 20 against Long Beach State. He started just four games.

"Last year, I got more publicity — and more respect — coming off the bench than I did starting," he said. "You realize once you get over that starting barrier, everything is just so much easier. There's something for everyone. Everybody's got to find their role, and I think I've found mine. I think the role is to win games. I think I lost sight of that last year."

A big part of the challenge for Wald was the step up from Division II to

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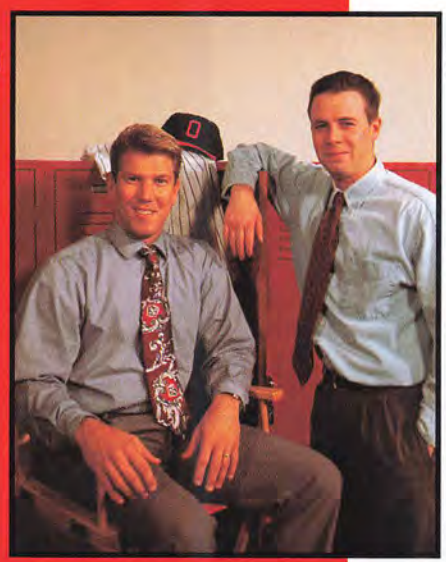

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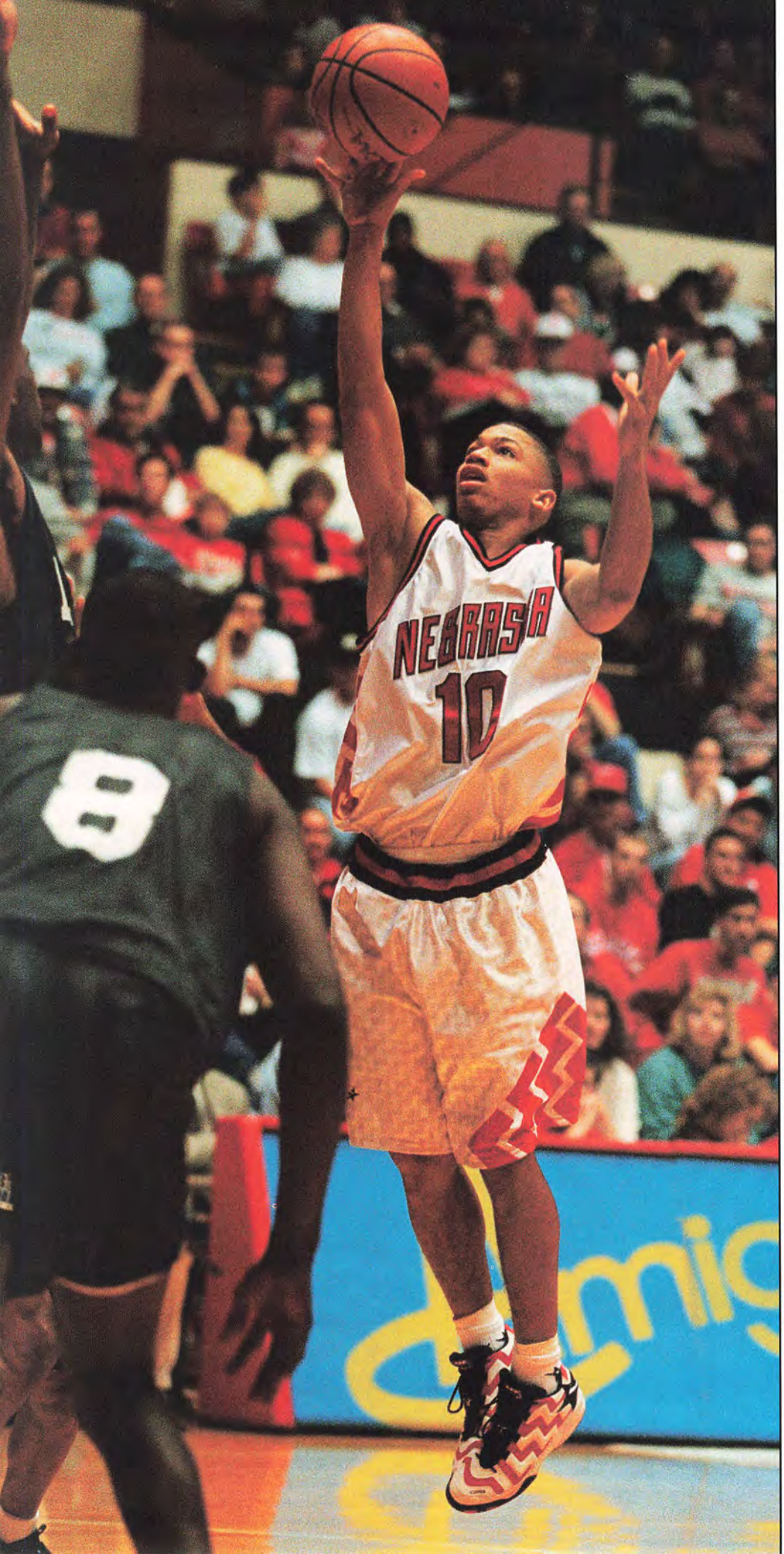

Division I. He transferred from Mankato (Minn.) State University after an All-North Central Conference season as a sophomore in 1992-93. Against the University of Nebraska at Omaha his freshman year, Wald scored a career-high 33 points.

He sat out the 1993-94 season because of the transfer rule, working in Nebraska's strength and conditioning program. But the year off wasn't that beneficial, he said.

"Experience is the No. 1 thing that you learn," Wald said. "You just learn what you cannot do and what you can do. Because, coming in, everybody believes that they're the most unbelievable athlete there is, but there's taller and quicker people, and you've got to realize what you can get away with and what you can't get away with. That's what I tried to focus on this summer. And then the other part was the confidence. At the end of last year, I was just a wreck. It was terrible. It was a year where you start out great, and then bam, it just hits you."

Nebraska Coach Danny Nee agreed with his point guard's assessment.

"I think there is a learning curve for a player like Tom Wald who came from another school," Nee said before the season. "Now, he's got one season under his belt, and he'll be better mentally prepared for the Big Eight season."

Part of that is learning and understanding his role.

"I can honestly say, I think at times, your first year in here, you get snowballed with a lot of

Lue took off right from the start. The 6-foot guard from Raytown (Mo.) High School, established a new NU freshman scoring record in the second game of the year with his 30 points during the Huskers' 114-106 overtime win against Oregon at the Big Island Invitational.

things," Wald said. "Even as a junior, it's still the first year in the Big Eight. This year, I think I've got a little more clear attitude on what I want to get done, and that's give quality time when I'm in there — hit the open shot, push it up the floor, get other people the ball. I'm willing to accept that and bring something to this team — maybe some joy, something uptempo, something the state of Nebraska can enjoy. Because, when it comes down to it, we're just having fun out there and trying to win games."

Wald is one of six seniors who hope to go out in style by returning to the NCAA Tournament, which the Huskers missed in 1994-95 after four straight trips to the Big Dance. But just getting there isn't all he has in mind.

"My first goal is I want to go to the Sweet 16 this year," Wald said. "To do that, you've got to do a lot of other things that kind of share goals. Like Coach Nee says 'personal bests.' If I averaged eight-and-a-half points last year, I want to average over eight-and-a-half this year. If I averaged four assists a game, I want to average over four. Everything is just stepping it up a notch. I'm a goal-oriented person. I wouldn't be here if I wasn't."

Wald, a 6-foot, 192-pounder, averaged 8.4 points and 4 assists per game. He twice had 11 assists, the highest total for a Husker since Brian Carr dished out 13 in a game during the 1986-87 season. He led the Huskers with 19 points, including 4 of 4 from three-point range, in their first exhibition game this season, but doesn't expect to be in that position often.

"I'm not going to look to do that, but tonight it was there." he said afterwards. "My shots were falling. In a normal game, you'd like to hit a couple of those (threes) at key times but let other people get their shots."

That lack of selfishness and presence of senior leadership should make a big difference, Wald said.

"There's definitely a lot better leadership this year," he said. "(Erick) Strickland has taken the initiative as far as the burden of leadership. I think a lot of other people, like Jaron (Boone), are setting a good, positive, example. Terrance Badgett is coming off the bench now, and the guy has not said one

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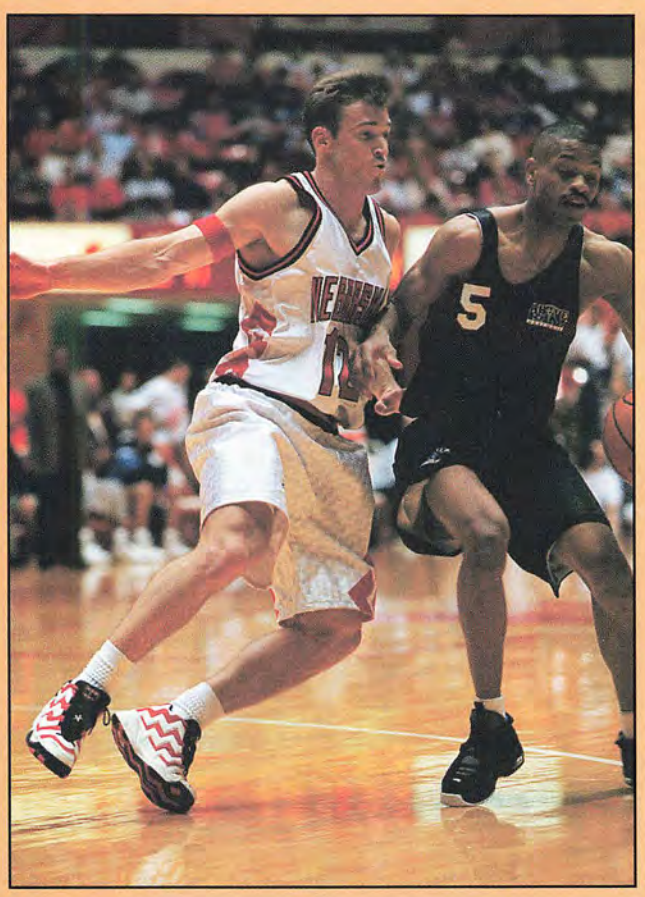

The Wald File

In addition to his proficiency on the court, Wald is equally adept in the classroom. The senior from Brooklyn Park, Minn., holds a 3.05 grade point average in business management and is one of 22 student-athletes on the UNL Student Advisory Board.

1994-95 STATISTICS

GP	FG%	3PT%	FT%	Assists	Steals	Turn.
32	.466	.240	.833	128	34	63

CAREER HIGHS AT NEBRASKA

Points .....21 vs. Delaware State, Dec. 12, 1994
Rebounds .....6, vs. Appalachian State, Dec. 31, 1994
Assists .....11, vs. Appalachian State, Dec. 31, 1994
11, vs. Kansas State, Jan. 12, 1995
Steals.....4 vs. Delaware State, Dec. 12, 1994

COLLEGIATE HONORS

1994-95 Big Eight All-Bench Team
1994-95 Big Eight Academic Honor Roll
1995 Nebraska Strength Index Award
1995 Nebraska Performance Index Award
1993 Nebraska Ironman Award
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negative thing. I think you've got a lot more senior examples, positive examples. With that, everyone else is going to fall in line, or you're not going to play."

Wald has settled into his role and has never regretted his decision to transfer to Nebraska. He also considered Iowa State before deciding on Nebraska when his parents moved to Lincoln in the spring of 1993.

"It's a very positive program," Wald said. "It's the people that I'm playing with, my parents, the academics. Everything's tops. It's a good positive system. It's fun."

Professional basketball is one possibility after graduation for the 23-year-old, who was born in Pueblo, Colo., and attended Park Career High School in Brooklyn Park, Minn.

"I've got a lot of plans," he said. "Everybody wants to play ball after college. Whether or not I'm going to have the desire after this year, I don't know. You know, I've been busting my butt for five years. There's a lot of competition. I don't know. We'll see. I'm going to do what's best for me."

The Big Eight Academic Honor Roll selection, who holds a 3.05 grade-point average in business management, is definitely looking at other options.

"I'm going to graduate with great grades in finance," he said. "And I'm secure in my family and my friends that I can just come out and have a good time and take things as they are. But I still want to win. Don't get me wrong. I'm not this happy-go-lucky guy. I would rather win 30 games than lose 14 like we did last year."

That's why he's trying to keep things in perspective this season.

"There was a teaching point to that Michigan State game last year," Wald said. "I thought I was handling it right, but really, it's one game in a 30-game season against a rated team. Sure, it puts you into the rankings for one week, and then we . . . You've got to be able to back it up every time you come out. Now, I realize that." ■

"...I'm in there — hit the open shot, push it up the floor, get other people the ball. I'm willing to accept that and bring something to this team — maybe some joy, something uptempo, something the state of Nebraska can enjoy."

Tom Wald

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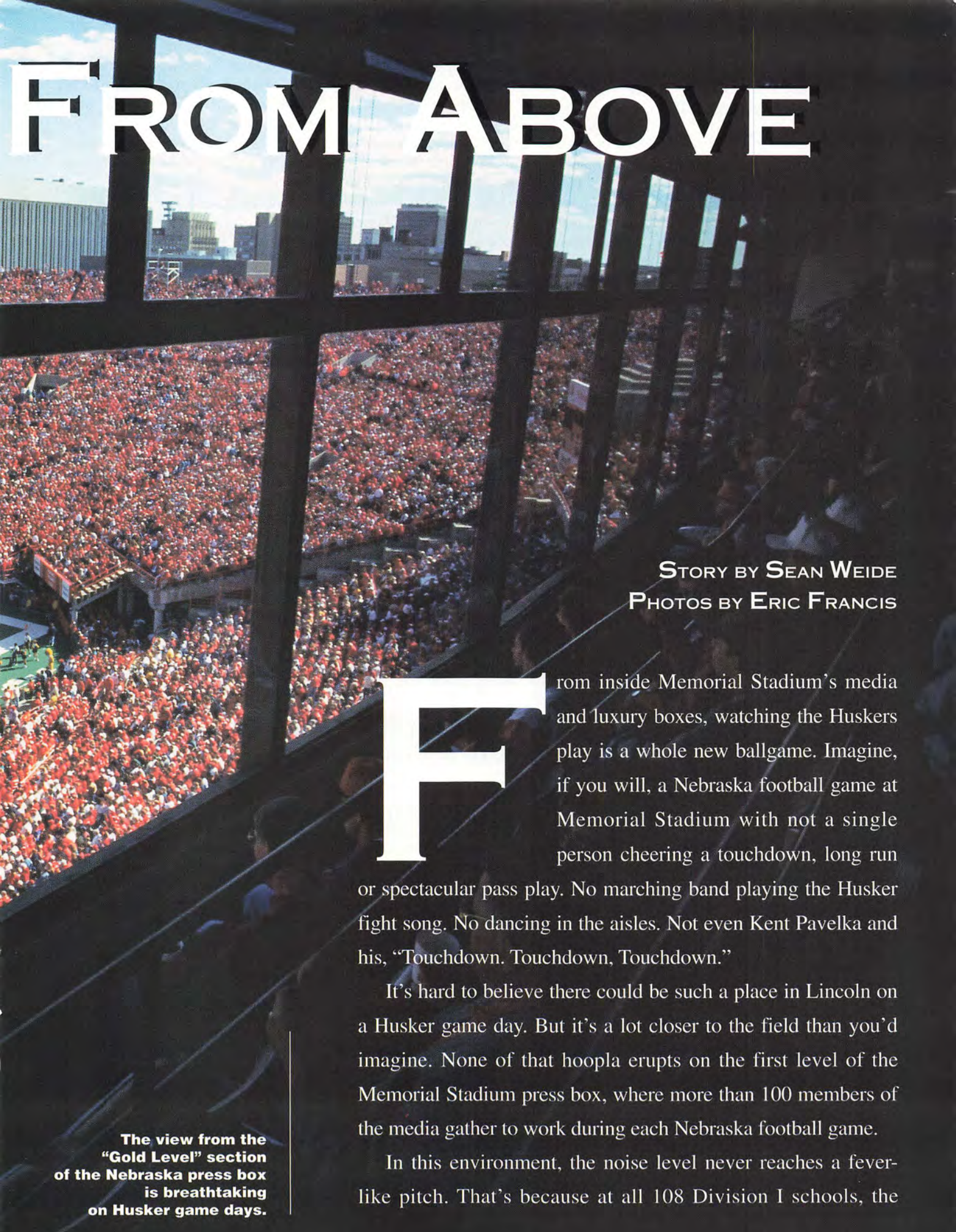

The view from the "Gold Level" section of the Nebraska press box is breathtaking on Husker game days.

Story by Sean Weide
Photos by Eric Francis

From inside Memorial Stadium's media and luxury boxes, watching the Huskers play is a whole new ballgame. Imagine, if you will, a Nebraska football game at Memorial Stadium with not a single person cheering a touchdown, long run or spectacular pass play. No marching band playing the Husker fight song. No dancing in the aisles. Not even Kent Pavelka and his, "Touchdown. Touchdown, Touchdown."

It's hard to believe there could be such a place in Lincoln on a Husker game day. But it's a lot closer to the field than you'd imagine. None of that hoopla erupts on the first level of the Memorial Stadium press box, where more than 100 members of the media gather to work during each Nebraska football game.

In this environment, the noise level never reaches a fever-like pitch. That's because at all 108 Division I schools, the

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— SIGN ON THE MEDIA LEVEL
OF THE NEBRASKA PRESS BOX

NCAA requires the media to maintain a "working" atmosphere. No loud talking and definitely no cheering. Helping preserve this library-like mood is the virtual sound-proof nature of the structure. In fact, the low din of hushed talking is interrupted only by the drone of press box announcer Bill Bryant, who announces the action on every play. The stadium's public address announcer, Rick Schweiger, cannot be heard inside the press box since the media-level windows do not open.

"No. 30, Ahman Green, gain of four. Second down and six at the Nebraska 39," Bryant typically drones at the conclusion of each play.

Touchdowns are trumpeted with no greater fanfare than: "Damon Benning, six-yard touchdown run. Damon Benning, six-yard touchdown run. Six minutes, 22 seconds remaining in the second quarter," along with a recap of the scoring drive: "Five plays, 52 yards, one minute, 31 seconds."

But don't let the sterile disposition of the media level deceive you. Just one deck higher are luxury boxes where the mood is a little more festive, particularly when things are going the Huskers' way.

The first thing you notice when you step off the elevator onto the "Gold Ticket" level is the view. There are few places in Memorial Stadium that offer a more picturesque glimpse of the "Sea of Red" and the field's large green expanse of artificial turf.

The 300-seat, second-level deck is about as close to a luxury skybox as you'll find in Lincoln. Complete with red carpeting and matching padded theater seats, patrons seem more apt to ask members of the Junior Air Force ROTC unit, who serve as guest attendants, for escargot and a glass of champagne than a hot dog and a Coke.

Fans are treated like VIPs in these surroundings. Each ticket-holder receives a complimentary game program and concessions are available just behind the seating area. Ten televisions are scattered throughout the room showing the game and replays. Uncharacteristic of the rest of the stadium, though, there is hardly ever a line extending outside the restroom on this level.

Maybe it's the hallowedness of the facility or its church-like appearance, but rarely do the indoor fans match the excitement of their outdoor counterparts.

"We don't have too many people jumping up and down up here," usher Bob Hoelscher said. "You can always tell the new ones, though. They'll clap and cheer after a touchdown and then everybody will kind of give them a

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weird look and they don't do it again next time."

Having worked Husker game days for seven years, Hoelscher said he misses the ambiance the press box filters out.

"On nice days, you'd almost rather be out there," he said, gesturing toward the huge glass windows, "but it's nice to be up here when the weather is lousy."

Not everyone stays warm and dry in the press box during late-season games. The roof, otherwise known as the photographers' perch, serves as the control center for the majority of the electronic media.

"It's definitely the best view in the house," WOWT's Merlyn Klaus said as he peered down 150 feet to the field. "But it's not uncommon to set a can of pop on the ledge and have it freeze solid during games in November."

Of the 11 bays on the roof, four are reserved for the university's use, one for game management staff, one for security and the remaining five for media use.

Receivers coach Ron Brown (center) is a frequent pre-game visitor to the Nebraska Football Network's open-air booth, from which the radio broadcast originates to more than two dozen stations around the nation.

While smoking is permitted only in designated areas of the stadium, smoke can often be seen wafting out of the "J & J" booth of former assistant coaches Jack Pierce and John Melton. Next door to them is the chancellor's booth.

Sharing space on the first level with the media are booths for Nebraska coaches, NU Coach Tom Osborne's wife, Nancy, athletic director Bill Byrne, opposing coaches, and radio station KFAB, flagship station of the Nebraska Football Network. Each booth includes a television set and catered food and drink.

The uniqueness of an indoor seat at a Nebraska football game is desired by many, cherished by most, disliked by some and experienced by few.

"I feel very privileged to be where I am," said Kim Wellman, a reporter for radio station KKPR in Kearney. "But quite honestly, if you're there to watch the game and work, I'd rather be upstairs and inside. Outside, there's so many distractions that it's hard to watch what's happening in the game." ■

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- Colorado beat Notre Dame 41-24 in last year's Fiesta Bowl.
- The Fiesta Bowl has played host to two national championship games (1987 — Penn State 14, Miami 10; 1989 — Notre Dame 34, West Virginia 21).

THE HUSKERS IN BOWLS

- Nebraska's 26-year streak of consecutive bowl appearances is the nation's longest.
- The Huskers are 9-17 in New Year's Day bowl games.
- Under Tom Osborne, Nebraska is 9-13-0 in bowls and 0-4 in the Fiesta Bowl.
- Last year's 24-17 win over Miami in the Orange Bowl snapped a string of seven consecutive losses in bowl games.
- Mike Rozier holds the school record for most yards rushing in a bowl game with 147 against Miami in the 1984 Orange Bowl.

Photo by Shaun Sartin

Husker fans remember well Cory Schlesinger's touchdown with less than three minutes remaining in the 1995 Orange Bowl put Nebraska ahead for good, 24-17, and gave the Huskers their first national title in more than 20 years.

A LOOK BACK AT NEBRASKA IN PREVIOUS FIESTA BOWLS

1975 ARIZONA STATE 17, NEBRASKA 14

The Huskers led 7-6 at the half, then drove 91 yards on their first possession of the second half to go up 14-6 on Monte Anthony's four-yard touchdown run.

But Arizona State backup quarterback Fred Mortensen came off the bench to throw a 10-yard TD pass to John Jefferson and complete a two-point conversion pass to Larry Mucker to tie the game at 14-14.

Nebraska was forced to punt and Danny Kush, son of Sun Devil head coach Frank Kush, came on to kick a 29-yard field with 4:50 remaining to give ASU its fourth Fiesta Bowl victory in as many tries.

1986 MICHIGAN 27, NEBRASKA 23

Michigan took advantage of two Nebraska fumbles and a blocked punt to score 24 points in the third quarter and erase the Huskers' 14-3 halftime lead.

Wolverine running back Jamie Morris, who rushed for 88 of his 156 yards in the third quarter, set up three short scoring runs, including two by quarterback Jim Harbaugh.

Nebraska quarterback Steve Taylor scored the Huskers' only touchdown of the second half on a one-yard run. Michigan then gave Nebraska a safety on its next possession, but Michigan's Garland Rivers intercepted Taylor in the end zone with 28 seconds left to seal the Wolverines' victory.

1988 FLORIDA STATE 31, NEBRASKA 28

Nebraska couldn't hold onto a 14-0 first-quarter lead as Florida State quarterback Danny McManus conducted an air assault on the Huskers.

McManus completed 28 of 51 passes for 375 yards and threw for two of his three touchdowns in the second quarter to put the Seminoles ahead 21-14 at the half.

After Tyreese Knox's four-yard TD run at the end of the third quarter put the Huskers ahead 28-24, the Seminoles embarked on their 97-yard, game-winning drive. McManus connected on seven of nine passes during the march.

1990 FLORIDA STATE 41, NEBRASKA 17

This time it was Seminole quarterback Peter Tom Willis who picked the Blackshirts apart. Willis had the best passing day ever against Nebraska, throwing for five touchdowns while setting Fiesta Bowl records for passing yardage (422) and total offense (414).

The Seminoles outscored the Huskers 41-3 over the second and third quarters to erase Nebraska's 7-0 first-quarter lead. Quarterback Gerry Gdowski hooked up with Morgan Gregory for the Huskers' only touchdown of the first half.

Mickey Joseph relieved Gdowski in the fourth quarter and scored Nebraska's only points of the second half.

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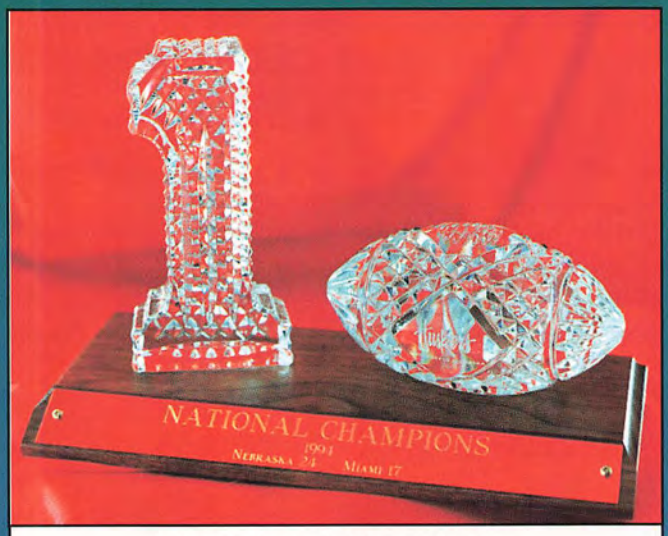

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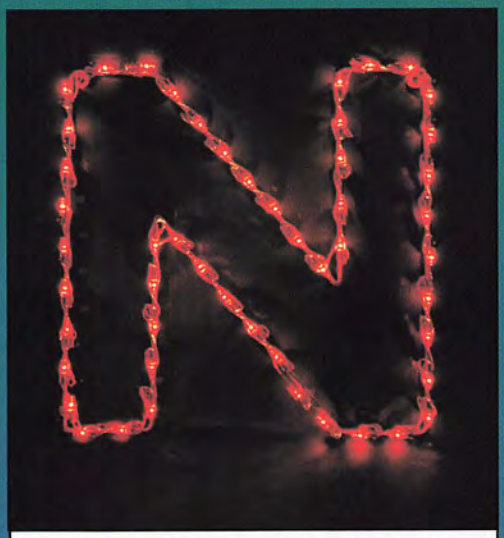

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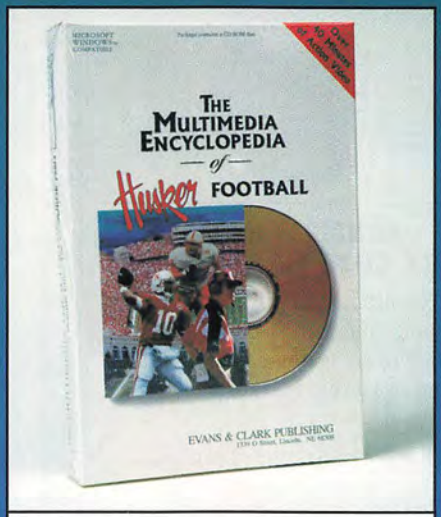

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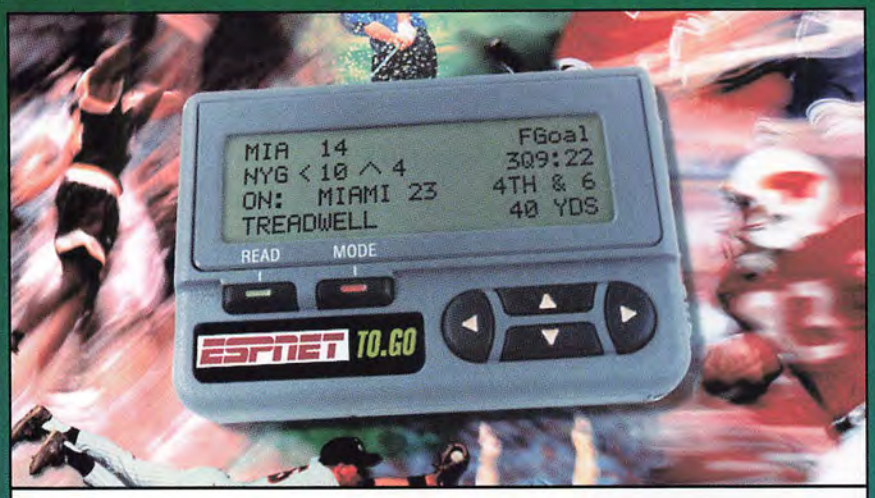

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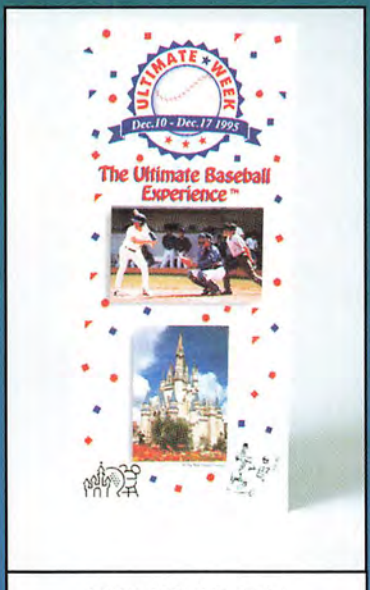

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By Jon Ryan

This 'regular guy' stayed put

Jack Gutierrez had to forgo his dream of coaching at a Division I school to help Platte College's basketball team reach new heights.

JACK GUTIERREZ REMEMBERS what was going through his mind when he made his first trip to the Platte campus of Central Community College more than 16 years ago.

At the time, Gutierrez was bringing his Kearney State College junior varsity men's basketball team to the school, situated three miles north of Columbus, to compete in the annual Columbus Holiday Tournament.

"When we left town I was thinking a junior college would be maybe a one-building college," he said. "But when I saw how big it was with all the trees and everything, I was impressed right away."

So impressed that Gutierrez made his decision to coach at Platte College the next night.

After overhearing a heated discussion between then-Platte campus coach Rich McGill and a Platte administrator, Gutierrez knew a position might soon be opening up. His ears hadn't deceived him. Soon after, Gutierrez learned the job was open.

"I came after it real aggressively," he said.

And though he never intended to be at the school more than a few years, Gutierrez is now trying to lead the school to its second-ever Nebraska Community College Athletic Association title (NCCAA). The first came a year ago when the Raiders and Southeast Community College of Beatrice were named co-champions.

For the 44-year-old Gutierrez, the share of the league title marked 15 years of toiling in relative obscurity. Other than coverage from the local newspaper and radio stations, the Raiders receive little attention outside the seven counties that border the Platte County school.

It seems odd that a Raider basketball program with so much success has just one league title. But no more odd for a man — who hoped he would someday be coaching against the likes of John Thompson, Dean Smith and Bobby Knight — who is still doing the laundry for his team.

"I had the idea," Gutierrez said, "that I would use this job as a stepping stone. I thought I'd stay maybe two or three years on my way to Georgetown or Kentucky or somewhere else. But I kind of grew into the town."

That doesn't sound unusual for someone who grew up in small-town, Nebraska. Gutierrez was a four-sport man at St. Ann High School in Lexington, where he lettered three times in football, baseball and track, and twice in basketball. As a 135-pound quarterback his freshman year at Chadron State College, Gutierrez knew he needed to grow. And while he was up to 175 pounds by the end of his freshman year, he still had some growing to do — in ways other than physically.

After playing a reserve role as a sophomore, Gutierrez took three years off to grow while working for the railroad and earning extra money to finish school. He returned to school and the football team in 1974, but his contributions as a quarterback were minimal. An injury after his best showing as a reserve in his junior season negated any effects of his best showing.

He had more success after getting his bachelor of arts degree in physical education, however, when he got a job at his alma mater. Coaching football, boys basketball and girls track at St. Ann, Gutierrez took his basketball team to the 1978 Class D state tournament.

He was at St. Ann for three years before going to Kearney, where he earned his master's degree and coached the junior varsity team that brought him to Columbus.

"That was the first time I ever stepped on Platte campus," he said.

But just like when he saw the school for the first time, Gutierrez had a lot to learn about the trappings of his new job, including how he would have to compete to recruit players and fans. Fans were plentiful when his Kearney State team played in the holiday tournament at Platte. But that, he soon discovered, wasn't exactly common.

In the early '70s, the Raiders typically drew crowds of up to 1,500 for their home games in the Physical Education and Health Center, more commonly referred to as the Raider Field House. That, however, was prior to the introduction of high school girls' basketball in Nebraska.

Now the competition for fans is more difficult and the Raiders are lucky to draw more than 100 people a game, regardless of their record or how big the game might be.

Gutierrez succeeds at a school that offers no full scholarships and has a policy which prohibits recruiting outside the state.

"That's kind of what our program has as its trademark — that we play with Nebraska kids and are able to beat teams with out-of-state players."

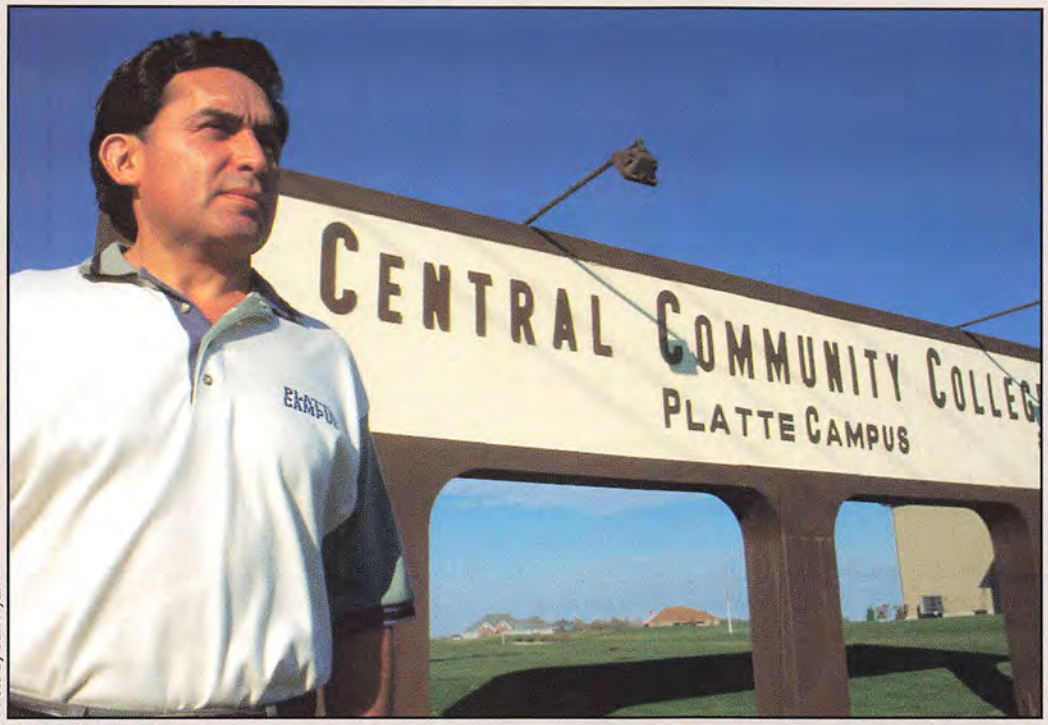

Photo by Jon Ryan

Gutierrez didn't see himself staying put at a small junior college in northeast Nebraska for very long. "I had the idea that I would use this job as a stepping stone," he said.

During a time out, Gutierrez' voice can be overheard above the whispers of the fans.

"At first that was really tough," Gutierrez said. "Even when I was in high school we played in front of a full gym. It was kind of depressing, and at first I took it kind of personally."

Then there was the lesson Gutierrez had to learn about recruiting. Central Community College, which also has campus sites at Hastings and Grand Island, prohibits recruiting outside of Nebraska. Partly to promote the state's own students and partly to keep expenses down, the school's policy has become somewhat of a rally cry for Gutierrez and his Raiders.

In his 15 years at the school, Gutierrez's teams have had just three losing seasons; two of them during his first two seasons: 6-23 in 1980-81 and 12-16 in 1981-82, and another in 1983-84, when the team went 13-16. His career record stood at 232-214 coming into this season.

"It's really gotten to the point where I like to be able to compete against some of the big dogs with Nebraska kids," Gutierrez said. "That's kind of what our program has as its trademark — that we play with Nebraska kids and are able to beat teams with out-of-state players."

Other schools in the NCCAA including Southeast, Northeast Community College of Norfolk, McCook Community College and Mid-Plains Community College of North Platte , don't follow the policy of only in-state recruiting. There have been players on the Raiders' roster from other states, but they were brought to Columbus either by word of mouth or by coincidence.

The recruiting limitation is one of the things that led McGill, the men's basketball coach at Midland Lutheran College the past 15 years, to seek another job.

The fact that Platte's housing facilities are limited didn't help either, McGill said.

"The thing I found really hard was the lack of dormitories," McGill said. "That was a definite disadvantage (in recruiting)."

Platte's lone dormitory has just 50 units, accommodating 106 students. What's worse, as a Division II junior

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college, Raider athletes can't be offered full scholarships, which include room and board. An average of three players per year receive full tuition and fees, and book money, which totals about $1,500 in value. All of Gutierrez's recruits receive at least their tuition and fees paid.

Still, Gutierrez has managed to recruit enough talent to put together consistently competitive clubs, including one that finished 23-10 in 1984-85 and another that was 20-9 in 1990-91. But his best postseason team was the 1982-83 squad that finished 19-14 after losing in the national championship game of the National Little College Athletic Association tournament.

"That was a classic example of a team that peaked right at the end of the season," Gutierrez said. "We finished second in the league tournament after losing by seven to Southeast, and they went on to finish third in the National Junior College Athletic Association championships."

While many of his former players have gone on to play at four-year schools and universities, only one went on to play at a Division I school. Lee Steinbrook, a graduate of Columbus High School, was a reserve at Nebraska from 1992-94.

Gutierrez has learned he has advantages other coaches in the conference don't have, including having to spend less time on the road recruiting.

"In a way I am kind of envious, but in a way I'm not," he said with a grin. "Sometimes you don't know what you're getting as far as character."

After just several years at Platte, Gutierrez and a friend, Ken Bonk, painted "Platte" in big, 8-foot-tall gold letters in front of a background of green and gold paint on the south wall of the Raider Field House. For Gutierrez, it was a little like finally hanging a picture on the wall and calling it home.

"A four-year job would be nice," Gutierrez said. "But I'm going to be 45 in January, and that's a little old for me to take an assistant's job."

For now, he plans to continue doing the things he deems best for his players and program. And for many players with hopes of playing at a four-year school, Platte is a good place to start.

"You always like to get a player as many games as you can," Gutierrez said. "A lot of guys who go to NAIA or Division II four-year schools might have to redshirt right away. But those guys can come here and get a lot of games in as a freshman and sophomore. They get 62 games in over a two-year span."

It seems only fitting that Gutierrez, the same person who wanted to use Platte as a stepping stone for bigger and better things, is still doing his best to make the school a stepping stone for his players.

"Jack's done a heck of a good job," McGill said. "But what I like about him is that he doesn't try to pretend he's some big-time coach. He's a regular guy, and I like regular guys."

Gutierrez still makes a note to look at the windmill that guards the west end of the Platte campus — the same windmill he first noticed on his first visit to the school. "It's kind of a trademark for the campus brochures," he said.

Don't be surprised if someday Gutierrez's picture doesn't sit beside it. NSM

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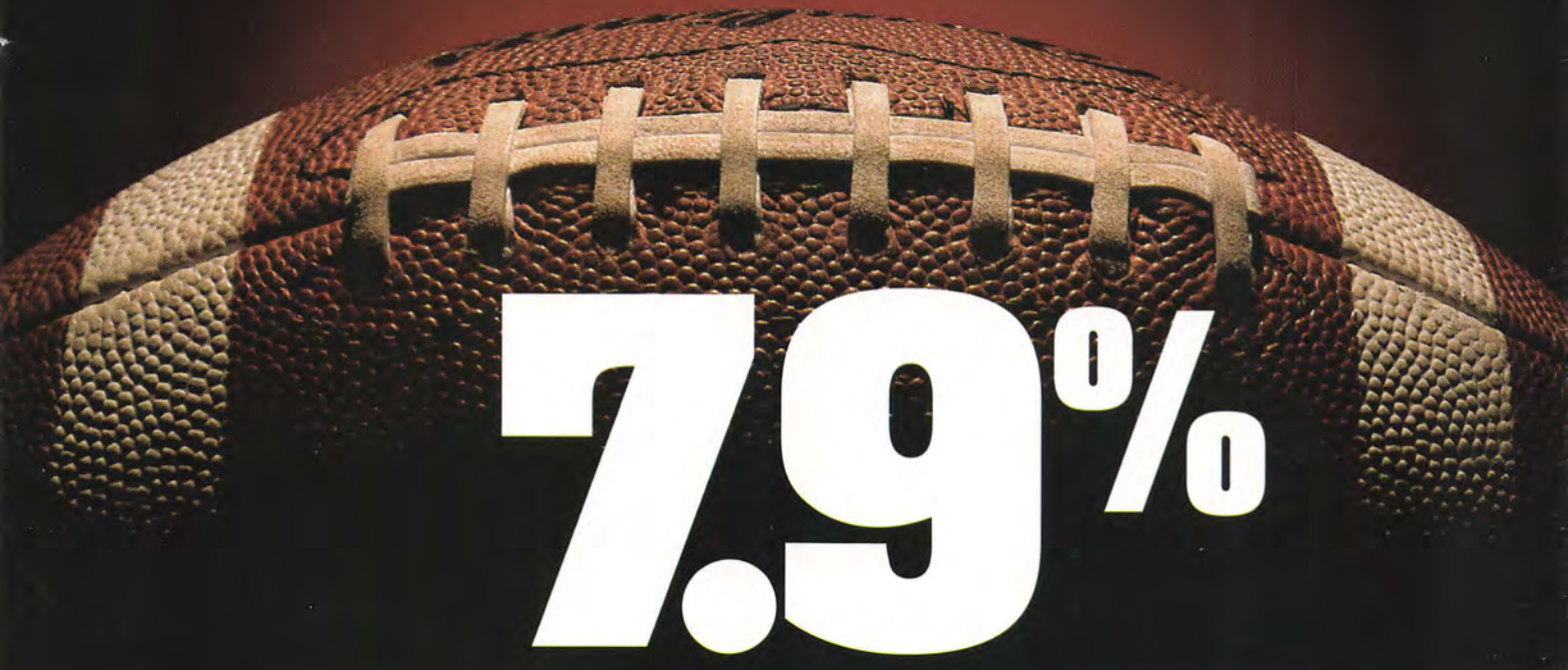

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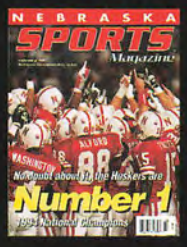

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Likely CWS Trips Lure Carlyle, Fearnow

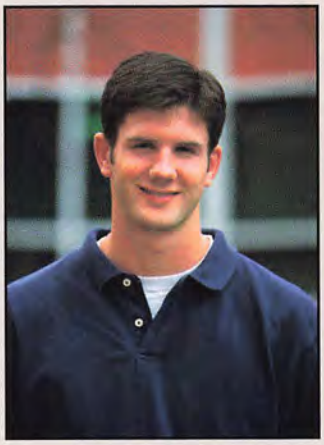
Two Nebraska high school pitchers are banking on schools with rich College World Series traditions to return them to their home state each year in early June.

Omaha Westside's Brian Fearnow and Bellevue East's Buddy Carlyle highlight the list of players from Nebraska high schools who committed to colleges and universities during the week-long early signing period that concluded Nov. 15.

Carlyle, a right-hander who posted a 10-2 record and a 0.87 ERA in American Legion competition for Kimball Siding last summer, chose Arizona State over 30 other NCAA Division I schools that had expressed interest in him. Arizona State's five NCAA baseball titles are second only to USC's 11.

The 6-foot-6, 210-pound Fearnow, who had a 1.99 ERA and an 11-2 record for Omaha's Holmes Freight in summer Legion play, selected Stanford over Nebraska, Yale and Duke. The Cardinals have made nine CWS appearances.

Two names missing from the list of early signers were basketball-football standout J.R. Edwards of Lincoln Southeast and basketball guard Alton Mason of Lincoln Northeast. Both have opted to wait until the spring signing period, which begins Feb. 7.NSM



Omaha Westside's Brian Fearnow, left, and Bellevue East's Buddy Carlyle made the baseball coaches at Stanford and Arizona State happy by committing during the early signing period in November.

Early-Signing High School Athletes In Nebraska

NAME	HIGH SCHOOL	SPORT	COLLEGE
Reshea Bristol	Omaha Bryan	Basketball	Arizona
Buddy Carlyle	Bellevue East	Baseball	Arizona State
Troy Carley	Millard South	Baseball	Creighton
Doug Johnston	Millard South	Baseball	Creighton
Nathaniel Stoner	Gering	Baseball	Creighton
Trish Martin	South Sioux City	Basketball	Drake
Pete Smart	Omaha Westside	Baseball	Kansas
Ryan Vermeer	Millard South	Golf	Kansas
Brian Doerr	Ralston	Baseball	Nebraska
Tony Manganaro	Omaha Northwest	Baseball	Nebraska
Nicole Kubik	Cambridge	Basketball	Nebraska
Charlie Rogers	South Sioux City	Basketball	Nebraska
Brooke Schwartz	Gering	Basketball	Nebraska
Elizabeth Bahensky	Kearney	Golf	Nebraska
Derek Leiter	Lincoln Southeast	Gymnastics	Nebraska
Cindy Roethemeyer	North Platte	Softball	Nebraska
Chad Hohnstein	Scottsbluff	Track and Field	Nebraska
Mandy Monson	Wallace	Volleyball	Nebraska
Brad Vering	Howells	Wrestling	Nebraska
Lee Ramey	Kearney	Basketball	Nebraska-Kearney
Darcy Stracke	Chambers	Basketball	Nebraska-Kearney
Karla Simmons	Sumner-Eddyville-Miller	Softball	Nebraska-Kearney
Victor Ebong	Omaha Burke	Basketball	N. Carolina-Wilmington
Scott Cavey	Omaha Creighton Prep	Baseball	Notre Dame
Brian Fearnow	Omaha Westside	Baseball	Stanford

Note: List compiled as of Nov. 15, 1995.

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commentary

by Sean Weide

Next Time Say 'Oz-Burn'

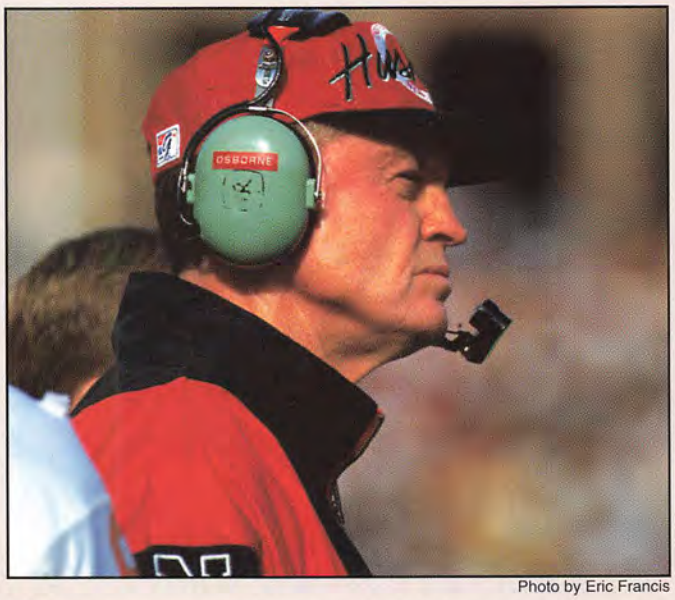

Photo by Eric Francis

IT'S TIME TO SET THE RECORD straight. Tom Osborne is one of college football's all-time coaching legends, right up there with Bear Bryant, Knute Rockne and Joe Paterno.

In Nebraska, he is one of the most talked about and recognized persons from Elkhorn to Ashby. The coach of the Cornhuskers for the last 23 years has won one national championship and is one win away from another.

Let's stop right there. While Osborne's name may be on the lips of football fans across the state — and the nation — the way it is being pronounced isn't correct 95 percent of the time.

Pronounce it "Oz-Burn," not "Oz-Born."

Although this is probably news to most people, it really isn't a stunning revelation. The correct pronunciation of Osborne's name is believed to have been first revealed in a column written by former Omaha World-Herald sports editor Mike Kelly in 1982.

Kelly's column was titled: "It's Oz-burn: As in Sunburn."

In a recent conversation, Kelly told me, however, he can't take credit for trying to clear up the mispronunciation. Kelly recalled it was Tom Ash, a former World-Herald staffer and now chairman of the Cornhusker State Games, who tuned him into the proper pronunciation during a conversation the two had about Osborne in the late 1970s.

Despite several mentions in subsequent columns and nearly 100 percent correct pronunciation by broadcast media throughout the state, Kelly said he is astonished at just how many people still mispronounce Osborne's name.

Nebraska Sports Information Director Chris Anderson, whose job it is to inform the national television "talent" on how names should be pronounced, shakes her head and rolls her eyes when the pronunciation issue is brought up.

"We tell those guys before every game but they either don't listen or they think if they say it correctly, people tuning in will think they're making a mistake," Anderson said.

I will take the liberty of pointing out, however, that in the mammoth 320-page Husker Football media guide, there is not one mention of the unique pronunciation of Osborne's name among the 15 pages devoted solely to documenting his tenure at the school. Nor is his name listed in the section documenting 33 player's name pronunciations.

I have a personal interest in this issue. Take a look at my name in the department header on this page. I've experienced "name trauma" since the day I first set foot in a classroom. Most everyone pronounces my last name incorrectly. I've heard "Weed-EE," "Wide" and even "Weed." The correct pronunciation is "Wide-EE."

So what's the big deal? Mispronouncing names is part of life, you say? I can understand having my name mispronounced. After all, my last name isn't that common.

However, consider the subject. Between the months of August and January, Tom Osborne is the subject of more radio and television news stories than the governor. While he is the talk of sports talk shows, nine out of every 10 people who call in say "Oz-Born."

It's ironic that another Nebraska legend and Osborne's predecessor, Bob Devaney, had the same problem when he arrived on the Nebraska campus in 1962. When people began mispronouncing his name "De-VAIN-ee," someone came up with a catchy slogan, "Get off your fanny and back Devaney," to set the record straight.

This issue of mispronunciation intrigued me enough that I stopped Osborne after one of his weekly press conferences to ask him if having his name mispronounced. I find it hard to believe that a guy who has stood up for his offense, his defense and his choice of going for two instead of one wouldn't let people know they're making a mistake.

In his typical ho-hum, shucks-I'm-just-a-normal-type-of-guy style, Osborne said:

"It doesn't bother me. You can call me just about anything."

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The 'Ultimate' Tough Guy

GRAB YOUR CALENDAR and look ahead to see if you have plans for the 16th of this month. I realize most Saturday nights are busy in December, but if you haven't booked the 16th yet, I have a suggestion. Check out that night's pay-per-view TV schedule and note the listing for the fighting championship billed as the "Ultimate Ultimate."

This particular event was of no interest to me until I made a recent visit to the Omaha Police Department's shooting range. I happened to comment about the tight pattern one officer consistently peppered his targets with and was told to ask him what else he does well. So I did.

It turns out Omaha Police Officer Steve Jennum also is an ultimate fighting champion. He's like someone out of a Bruce Lee movie, but in Jennum's case, every kick, chop and bare-knuckled punch that he delivers is the real thing. He literally beats his opponents into submission.

That's what ultimate fighting is all about. It surfaced on the sports scene just over two years ago with wide-open rules that outlaw only two things: biting and eye-gouging. All other dirty play, such as hair pulling and a knee to the groin, is allowed. It's an alley fight for the crazies who play this adult-size version of "King of the Mountain."

Jennum wasn't a likely tough-man candidate as a youngster. One season of football at Omaha Northwest High School was more than enough so he moved all of his 130 pounds into the power lifting weight room and pumped up several years' worth of muscle.

A study of martial arts followed at age 22, and now, 10 years later, he's a third-degree black belt in Ninjutsu. During his ascension in the discipline, Jennum took some lumps that helped prepare him for the punishing blows of ultimate fighting. As he laughingly understates, "We train kinda hard." He illustrates that point with the story of the jumping spin kick from his practice partner that broke his arm.

Maybe that's why Jennum survived a stunning punch in his title match last year. It was his first tournament and he made it into the final round as an alternate. Nobody gave him a chance against a hulking Canadian, Harold Howard. Sure enough, Jennum was in trouble in the first 30 seconds of the match. Howard lunged forward with a right hand that had 240 pounds of hurt behind it and connected with such force that it opened a gash above Jennum's left eye.

It wasn't the blood that gave Jennum concern, it was the flashes of white light that clouded his vision. His reaction? "Whew, that was a good one," he thought.

What happened during the next two minutes was stunning for everybody in the auditorium. Rather than knuckle under, Jennum actually baited his experienced opponent into throwing that same punch again. This time, the haymaker missed and Jennum followed with a right hand that visibly buckled the Canadian's legs. One Ninjutsu move later, and the favorite was on his back under siege from Jennum's flailing fists. It was over in two-and-a-half minutes. Jennum was the champion and $60,000 richer.

Because of that performance, Jennum is one of the eight warriors who will battle later this month in the "Ultimate Ultimate." Whoever can dish out the most pain and withstand it at the same time will be the one left standing.

It's interesting that while three of the challengers weigh more than 260 pounds each, Jennum actually has dropped 25 pounds for the event. And somehow it seems fitting that he's trimmed down to his 195-pound fighting weight with an all-meat diet. No vegetables, no dairy products, no sugar and no bread. He sits down to sausage, ham and bacon in the morning, and finishes with two T-bone steaks at bedtime.

So now you understand why I suggest you check out the pay-per-view schedule Dec. 16. And after you watch him in action, I have another story for you. It has to do with the officer I noticed beside him at the shooting range. She happens to be his wife and you'll never guess where they met. Would you believe Tina Jennum also knows how to throw a jumping spin kick? NSM

John Knicely can be seen weeknights on WOWT Channel 6 in Omaha.

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Credit Reports: By applying for this account you agree that we may obtain credit reports for purposes of processing your application and for later purposes related to your account such as reviewing, updating and renewing it, increasing the credit line and collecting. If you request, you will be informed of whether or not a credit report was requested and of the name and address of the consumer reporting agency that furnished the report.

OHIO RESIDENTS: The Ohio laws against discrimination require that all creditors make credit equally available to all credit-worthy customers and that credit reporting agencies maintain separate credit histories on each individual upon request. The Ohio Civil Rights Commission administers compliance with this law.

CALIFORNIA RESIDENTS: The applicant, if married, may apply for a separate account. After credit approval, each applicant shall have the right to use this account to the extent of any credit limit set by the creditor and each applicant may be liable for all amounts of credit extended under this account to each joint applicant.

NOTICE TO MARRIED WISCONSIN APPLICANTS: No provision of any marital property agreement, unilateral statement under S.766.59 Wis. Stats., or court decree under S.766.70, Wis. Stats., adversely affects the interest of the creditor unless the creditor, prior to the time the credit is granted or an open-end credit plan is entered into, is furnished a copy of the agreement, statement, or decree, or has actual knowledge of the adverse provision.

New York residents may contact the New York state banking department to obtain a comparative listing of credit card rates, fees and grace periods.

New York State Banking Department — 1-800-518-8866.

The information about the costs of the card described in this application is accurate as of October 1, 1995. This information may have changed after that date. To find out what may have changed, write First Bankcard Center, P.O. Box 3696, Omaha, Nebraska 68103-0696.

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